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A

REFUTATION

OF THE DOCTRINE OF

TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.

BY

AYLETT RAINS, V. D. M.

"God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions."

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INTRODUCTION.

"Man know thyself," is a precept of unlimited importance. Without self-knowledge, no permanent foundation can exist, upon which to build a knowledge of the great diversity of things with which we are surrounded. Many of the religious delusions and impostures, which have existed, have obtained their influence and celebrity, through a wide spread ignorance of human nature, and can exist no longer than men shall remain shrouded in this mantle of darkness!

What, but ignorance of human nature, has led to the admission, by many religionists, of the doctrine of *total hereditary depravity?* A doctrine, which, in order to its refutation, needs but one enlightened glance of the mind's eye, at the principles of which man is composed. This doctrine, although incompatible with every principle of self-knowledge, has become extensively popular—is in fact a precious ingredient in many popular creeds—is the chief corner stone of Calvinistic and Arminian sectarism. Men with difficulty look within themselves; and being repeatedly told that their depravity is total and hereditary, take the truth of it for granted, on the *mere ipse dixit* of those who teach it, without that examination, which is necessary to a detection of its fallacies.

Incompatible, however, with truth, as the writer of the following pages conceives this doctrine to be, he would never have troubled the public with a line upon the subject, had he not been convinced that it is, in its effects upon society, the most deteriorating and pernicious. Human nature has been systematically abused and misrepresented. Those who have placed themselves in the *high seats* have supposed men to be by nature averse to all good, and inclined to all evil; and that continually! What is this, but the representing of men, to be by nature, devils incarnate? Is it possible, that misrepresentations of human nature, such as these, can fail to be productive of consequences the most appalling? If any man is so far bewildered, as to believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, must he not be discouraged from every attempt at reformation? Why should he try to reform, when he believes that all the workings of his whole nature are but the workings of a mass of depravity? This doctrine is, therefore, directly calculated to chain men down in sin; and to perpetuate, as well as to produce, every abomination:—hence, its refutation becomes indispensably necessary.

We said that this doctrine is the chief corner stone of Arminian and Calvinistic sectarism. The teachers of these systems take it for granted that human nature is totally depraved; and, hence, that men cannot believe, evangelically, from the force of the divine testimonies. The Bible is of course represented as a sealed book to the unregenerate; and as necessarily remaining so, until the Holy Spirit opens their minds. Thus, the gospel of the book is inefficacious, until the gospel of the Spirit gives it access! The book is, as the result of this teaching, neglected. The doctrine of essentials and unessentials is also presented, and strenuously advocated; and the effect of all this parade of noisy error is, to draw the attention of the people from the Bible, and to fix it upon those things which constitute the distinguishing peculiarities of Arminianism or Calvinism. Whereas, if the truth in relation to human nature were in the first instance known, the conclusion would be that the human mind can be operated upon by testimonies divine as well as human, written as well as oral: and that the effect of divine or evangelical testimony, is divine or evangelical faith: And this conclusion would also lead to so high an appreciation of the divine testimonies, as would exclude the doctrine of unessentials. By annihilating that metaphysical figment—*physico spiritual operation in order to faith*—and recommending the divine testimonies, the Bible would be the more examined, and faith, saving and evangelical, the spontaneous result. These facts, however, will be made more obvious in the sequel.

The reader must not suppose, that the writer of the following pages intends to deny, either human depravity, or the operations of the Spirit:—he believes in both, and merely denies that depravity is *total*, and that the spirit operates *abstractly*, and *physically* in order to faith! Now, if he prove that depravity is not *hereditary* and *total*, it will follow that men may believe savingly through the efficacy of testimony;—and, so soon as this shall have been proved to any person, the whole superstructure, whether of Calvinism, Arminianism, or Fullerism, which had been reared in his mind, must fall to the ground,—its foundation having been removed.

The writer intends to consider his reader as a rational being. He has learned, by painful experience, that with the bigot and the creature of prejudice, argument is useless. Such persons have no mind of their own;—they are the mere automata of those who think for them! He is thankful, however, that in our comparatively enlightened country, there are thousands who read—think—judge,—and conclude for themselves. To those persons, then, he will consider himself as speaking in this little volume. He hopes in the Lord Jesus Christ, that his labour will not be in vain. If he shall contribute a mite to the melioration of the condition of his species, he will be amply compensated. The doctrine of total hereditary depravity was, he thinks, brought into vogue among christians, by gloomy philosoph in the dark ages; and it is certainly more conge with the minds of croaking ascetics, than with the lightened cheerfulness with which Heaven born chri anity inspires its votarists. He trusts, therefore, t the following pages will be instrumental in wiping foul blot from the fair face of christianity, and caus many to become enamoured with her charms. T unprejudiced reader will, he thinks, be fully convin by a careful perusal of the following pages, that he itary depravity, has not placed him in a state, wh renders it as impossible for him to believe *savingly*, it was for Lazarus while dead to ascend from the gr in which he had lain four days; or, as it is for a d man to communicate life to his own body.

A DEFINITION.

"*Depravity*" means moral corruption: "*Total*" signifies wholly, complete: and "*Hereditary*" signifies descending by inheritance. The definition, then, of the phrase, "*total hereditary depravity*," as used in the following pages, is, as follows:—*total moral corruption, descending from Adam, through all parents, to their offspring; so that all Adam's posterity have been wholly corrupted by his first sin.* We design to present to the public a thorough refutation of this doctrine.

REMARKS ON THE ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.

This doctrine, most probably, originated with the oriental philosophers. This philosophy is said to have originated in Chaldea, or Persia: whence it passed through Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt; and mixing with other systems, formed many different sects. The oriental philosophers, though divided into a great number of sects, seem to have been generally agreed in believing *matter* to be the cause of all evil; and as the human body is composed of matter, it was supposed to be corrupt and vitiated—the source of every depraved passion and appetite. When, therefore, either these philosophers, or their disciples, were converted to christianity, they brought into the church with them many of their peculiarities; and hence, in the very infancy of christianity, we find the Gnostics propagating the doctrine of the depravity of matter. This led them to deny the humanity of Jesus Christ; or, that "Jesus had *come in the flesh.*" The apostle John alludes to this doctrine of the Gnostics, when he speaks of the "many deceivers that had gone out into the world:" and when he declares to his brethren, that "every one that denied that Jesus had come in *the flesh*, was a deceiver and an antichrist." The Gnostics taught that Jesus seemed to have flesh, but that he had none; that he seemed to have had his blood shed, but that he had no blood! They were, in short, incorrigible spiritualizers! "They looked upon all other christians," says Mr. Buck, "as simple, ignorant, and barbarous persons, who explained the scriptures in a *low*, *literal*, and *unedifying signification*." Thus, having spiritualized, or rather gnosticized the scriptures, they proceeded to spiritualize the *flesh* and *blood* of Jesus Christ!

Here, then, was laid, by these Gnostics, the broad foundation for all the subsequent corruptions of christianity. Their philosophical refinement, as no doubt they vainly imagined it to be, was too great, to admit of their submitting themselves to the rational doctrine of Jesus and his apostles. This doctrine must, therefore, be mysticized, until made to accord with their vain imaginings; and, finally, with the dreams of every subsequent visionary. In a short time, as a consequence of the doctrine of the total depravity of matter, and the necessity of spiritualizing the scriptures, innumerable metaphysical vagaries were superinduced. "Free will," "free grace," "original sin," &c. became the topics of angry controversy: "and this controversy," says Mosheim, "was the commencement of those unhappy contests, those subtle and perplexing disputes concerning grace, or the nature and operation *of that divine power*, which is spiritually required in order to salvation, that rent the church into the most deplorable divisions thro' the whole course of the succeeding age; and which to the deep regret of every true and generous christian have been continued down to the present time." Vol. 1, Pa. 336.

The *eaons*, or *emanations* of the Gnostics, seem to be *very nearly* the prototypes of modern revelations, and mystic spiritual operations. Ireneus accuses them, "of introducing into religion certain vain and ridiculous genealogies; that is, a kind of divine processions or emanations, which had foundation but in their own wild imagination. The Gnostics confessed, that these eaons, or emanations, were no where expressly delivered in the sacred writings; but insisted that Christ had intimated them in parables to *such as could understand them!*" *Buck. art. Gnostics*. These eaons, or emanations were, in the estimation of the Gnostics, the infallible illuminators: the book was, consequently, a matter of inferior consideration! Indeed, it may be fairly inferred, that the Gnostics taught that the book was a "dead letter" to all who were not the subjects of illumination from their *eaons*! "These eaons," said they, "are intimated by Christ in his parables, *to such as can understand them.*" They then, we conclude from this sentence, taught that those who were not the subjects of abstract illuminations, could not understand Christ's parables. We must, however, say of the Gnostics, that they were in one point more consistent than are the modern advocates for total hereditary depravity. These acute philosophers perceived that, as they held the doctrine of the total depravity of all matter, and by consequence the total depravity of human nature in so far as it is composed of matter, they must also hold the humanity of Jesus Christ to be totally depraved, if they admitted his humanity. They, therefore, denied that Jesus Christ had come in the *flesh!!* But, modern advocates for total depravity, apparently less acute than the Gnostics, advocate the total depravity of human nature; and yet teach that Christ came in this nature, "*flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone.*" But, if Christ came in our nature, and it is indeed totally depraved, then, he must have come in a totally depraved nature; and must consequently, in so far as he *was human*, have been himself totally depraved! Some persons in modern times, seeing this difficulty, have argued that Christ took human nature, such as it was before the fall; and that, consequently, the human nature of

Christ was pure. But this is gratuitous assumption! If Jesus took human nature, such as it was before the fall, he must, it seems to us, have *taken* it before the fall. This however was not the case! He was "*made,*" not of Adam, nor of Eve before the fall, but "*of a woman,*" nearly four thousand years after it. "*He was made of a woman*"—"Mary!" and "*was of the seed of David.*" Therefore, if Mary and all the seed of David were by nature wholly corrupt, the humanity of Jesus must have been wholly corrupt likewise. It is said that, "forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, Christ also himself *took part* of the same." Heb. 2: 14. But, if our whole nature is "wholly corrupt," there was *no part* of it, which was not *wholly corrupt*, which he could take!! It is also said that "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Heb. 2: 16.

We admit that if human nature had been only partially defiled by the first sin of Adam, Christ might have taken human nature without this defilement: and we think that this was most probably the fact. But, if the nature of man is nothing but a mass of sin, or corruption, then we say, that Christ could not have taken our nature, nor any part of it, without at the same time taking *at least a part* of our corruption!

THE CREEDS OF THE SECTS CALLED EVANGELICAL, CONTAIN THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.

As we expect to show, the entire futility of the doctrine of total hereditary depravity; and as we think it probable that many persons will doubt, (if we prove not the fact,) whether the orthodox sects hold this doctrine; we shall now proceed to lay before the reader, the doctrine of several popular creeds in relation to this *point.*

Baptist Philadelphia Confession: Our first parents by this sin, (original sin,) fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all, all becoming dead in sin, and *wholly defiled* in *all the faculties*, and *parts* of *soul* and *body*.

From this original corruption, whereby we are *utterly indisposed*, *disabled*, and made *opposite to all good*, and *wholly inclined to all evil*, do proceed all actual transgressions. Page 24th.

Presbyterian shorter Catechism: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? Ans. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists of the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and *the corruption of his whole nature.*

Fisher on shorter Catechism: Doth original sin consist in a mere privation, or want of righteousness? Ans. It consists also in the *corruption of our whole nature.* What is meant by the *corruption of our whole nature?* Ans. The *universal depravation both of soul and body, in all the faculties of the one, and members of the other.* Is original sin of its own nature *damning?* Ans. *Beyond all doubt!!!!*

Methodist Discipline, Seventh Article: Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the *corruption of the nature* of every man, that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man *is very far gone from original righteousness*, and of *his own nature inclined to evil* and that *continually.*

These extracts fully prove, that total hereditary depravity is the doctrine of those creeds from which they were taken. The Methodists, however, do not express this doctrine so fully, as do the Baptists, and the Presbyterians; yet, we think that *their* creed teaches the doctrine of total depravity. They tell us that, "Man of his *own nature* is *inclined* to evil and that *continually.*" Now, if the creed had said that, "Man is of his own nature inclined to evil," and had not added, "*and that continually*," we should not suppose total hereditary depravity to be necessarily its doctrine. But, the word *continually* alters the case materially. If man is of his own nature inclined to evil *continually*, there can be no moment of his life, in which he is not so inclined. Nay the man, the whole man, must be, if this article is strictly correct, inclined to evil every moment of his whole life; and this will leave no room for any inclination to good!

The Presbyterian Confession is less ambiguous. This tells us that *our whole nature* has been corrupted. Yes; every *faculty* of the soul, and every *member* of the body labors under a *universal depravation*. The very eyeballs, the ears, the fingers; the judgment, memory, understanding and imagination—all, all, are totally depraved!! Nor, are our friends the Baptists much in the rear in point of perspicuity. For they teach that, *all men* are *wholly defiled* in *all the faculties*, and *parts* of *soul* and *body*. This, gentle reader, "is the state,"—according to the creeds "whereinto man fell." The term "man" is here used generically, and means all mankind. Infants, then, according to the creeds, are totally depraved. Yes; every faculty of their souls, and every member of their bodies, are wholly defiled. So thought Calvin, when he called infants "*little Devils bringing their own damnation into the world with them*:" and so have thought thousands of others, who have taught that there are infants in hell!! The time has passed by, when men taught, "that there were infants in hell not a span long." We know not whether there are any persons now in existence, who believe this soul-chilling, this cruel doctrine. But, cruel and appalling as it is, it was based upon the doctrine of total hereditary depravity. The doctrine of total depravity was a stepping stone to that of infant damnation, and a thousand other errors, almost as extravagant and heaven-daring! It was, however, kind in some of the Calvinistic sects to teach that, the infants of believing parents should be saved! In this species of benevolence, the Presbyterians have, we believe, rather excelled our Calvinistic Baptist brethren: for the former sprinkle the children of believing parents, and bring them within the pale of *their* church; while the latter, permit the little totally depraved creatures to run at large, until the Lord calls them "effectually," and brings them *in* by "irresistible grace!" The Methodists, also, have been willing to contribute their mite, in order to the effecting of infant salvation. Hence, in their discipline, page 104, they *pray that, infants "may be delivered from the wrath of*

God!!!" This, as you may perceive, if you will read the passage just referred to, is to be effected in the institution of *sprinkling!!!* The prayer evidently supposes that God is angry with the little babies, because Adam sinned several thousands of years ago; but now, if you will permit a preacher to take one of them into his arms, and sprinkle a few drops of water on its face, and pray that it may be *delivered from God's wrath*, all will be well.

We trust that our reader will not suppose that we intend to treat the sects with severity. Far be this from us! We have been speaking of their benevolence; and we do verily believe that for the most part they are so. When a mother comes forward with her infant in her arms to have it sprinkled, she is no doubt prompted by maternal tenderness the most exquisite. She thinks that her child will be in some way benefitted by the institution to which she brings it; and so strong are the workings of parental affection, that she would not withhold her own life, could she by means of its sacrifice, contribute to its salvation. If the mother believes the creed, she believes that God is angry with her babe! No wonder then, that she consents to have some drops of water put on the face of the child, if she believes that the wrath of the Almighty may be in this way appeased.

Mr. Buck, under the head, "Calvinists," says that "they maintain that mankind are *totally depraved*, in consequence of the fall of the first man, who being their public head, his sin involved the corruption of all his posterity: and which corruption extends over the whole soul, and renders it unable to turn to God, or to do any thing truly good, *and exposes it to his righteous displeasure*, both in this world and *that which is to come!!*"

The explanation of original sin, as given by John Calvin, is as follows: "Original sin seems to be the inheritable perverseness and corruption of our nature, poured abroad into all the parts of the soul, which first maketh us deserving of God's wrath, and then also bringeth forth those works in us, called, in scripture, the works of the flesh. These two things are distinctly to be noted, that is, that, being thus in all parts of our nature perverted and corrupted, we are now, even for such corruption only, holden worthy of damnation, and stand convicted before God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence and purity."

The resolutions of the divines at Dort on this head, contain the following positions. "Such as man was after the fall, such children did he beget,—corruption by the righteous judgment of God being derived from Adam to his posterity—not by imitation, but by the propagation of a vicious nature. Wherefore, all men are conceived in sin, and are born the children of wrath, unfit for every good connected with salvation, prone to evil, dead in sins, and the servants of sin; and without the Holy Spirit's regenerating them, they neither will nor can return to God, amend their depraved nature, nor dispose themselves for its amendment." *Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

The above extracts afford abundant proof, that the creeds contain the doctrine of total hereditary depravity; and that the Calvinists, if they will be consistent, must also hold the doctrine of infant damnation!! The council at Dort declares that we "are born the children of wrath;" and Calvin says, that original corruption only, makes us worthy of damnation; and that, in consequence of this corruption, we stand convicted before God! Infants, then, stand convicted before God, and are worthy of damnation!! Reader, you must—yes, we say, you must either reject total hereditary depravity, or else go the whole length of the doctrine, premises and consequences, with Calvin and the council at Dort. Some Calvinists, when pressed with argument on this topic, tell us that they hope that all infants will be saved. We, however, cannot perceive how they can, with their premises, have any grounds for hope. Our Lord says "suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." But some of the creeds say, they are "totally depraved," "children of wrath," "worthy of damnation." Now, if both our Lord and the creeds are right in this matter, we might paraphrase the above verse, thus: "Suffer the little "totally depraved" "children of wrath" and heirs of "damnation," to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven:" that is, the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven are totally depraved! and are children of wrath! We rather think that our Lord intended to teach infantile innocence in this verse!

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME OF THOSE SCRIPTURES, BY WHICH THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY IS ATTEMPTED TO BE PROVED.

Having now shown that the doctrine of total hereditary depravity is the doctrine of the popular creeds, we shall proceed to an examination of some of those scriptures, which are supposed to prove this doctrine.

Perhaps, no passage is more frequently quoted in proof of total universal depravity, than Genesis 6:5. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." In order to give the reader a fair view of the doctrine of this text, we must also quote *Gen.* 6: 12. "And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for *all flesh had corrupted its way* upon the earth."

Now it does appear to us, that the twelfth verse of this chapter explains the fifth. The fifth verse declares that the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. That this verse is truly expressive of the moral condition of the human family at that time, is cordially admitted. The question then is, by what means were these antediluvians reduced to this state of moral degradation? "By the first sin of Adam," reply the creeds! The twelfth verse, however, does not answer the question in this way. *"All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth,"* is the emphatic answer, from the mouth of unerring truth. *Men* are blamed, as being the actors *in corrupting themselves;* a thing, which by no means could have been done, if they had been rendered totally corrupt by the sin of Adam. How could all flesh, by *nature* totally corrupt, corrupt itself? Can total corruption corrupt itself? This very passage, which is so frequently wrested from its connection, in order to prove the total universal corruption of human nature, does in fact disprove that doctrine; except it can be truly said, that a mass, which is totally corrupt, can corrupt itself! which is impossible!!

The *corruption* of the antediluvians was contracted *progressively.* For more than fifteen hundred years, had they been running this downward road. At length, just anterior to the deluge, God looked around upon the guilty race; and his emotion on beholding the wickedness of man, is expressed in the strong language of oriental hyperbole: "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Why? Because all flesh had *corrupted itself!* The Lord resolved to destroy all flesh by the waters of a deluge. Why? Because all flesh had *corrupted itself!* The Lord, however, had determined to perpetuate the human race through the family of Noah. But, if the children of Noah's family were totally depraved, they were as corrupt as the antediluvians.* What then did God expect to gain, by the destruction of the one and the perpetuation of the other? If we suppose, as indeed has been proved, that the moral depravity of the antediluvians was contracted progressively, and that the evil communications of corrupt parents, corrupted the sus-

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*If Noah and his family, as well as the whole antediluvian multitude, were by nature totally depraved, then, those who were saved in the ark were as morally corrupt, as those who were *drowned*: for no being can be more than totally depraved!! Therefore on this hypothesis, there was the same reason for destroying Noah and his family, that there was for destroying the antediluvians! *both parties* being by nature equally corrupt!!!

ceptible minds of their rising offspring, a most obvious reason presents itself for the destruction of the antediluvians, and the preservation of Noah and his family.

Noah was comparatively a righteous man. His example would consequently be much better than that of the people whom God had determined to destroy. Therefore by drowning the vile and abominable antediluvians, and placing it in a conspicuous position, the succeeding generations of our race would not only be cut off from the influence of antediluvian example, but would have the benefit of the good example of Noah. This was a worthy motive, and justifies the ways of God to men.

We shall be asked, however, "whether, the fact, that all men, from Adam to the present time, have sinned, is not a proof that all men have derived a totally depraved nature from Adam." The reader will please to notice, that we have not denied that all the human family may have received great injury from the sin of Adam. We intend to give our views on this subject afterwards. In this place, however, we must observe that we cannot perceive that the universality of sin affords the shadow of a proof of native hereditary depravity; much less of total depravity. Just look at the first sin that was committed! Read the history of that transaction! Do you not perceive, with what readiness our mother Eve, and afterwards our father Adam, reached forth their hands to grasp the prohibited fruit? Now, if the readiness of all men to commit sin, is a proof that all men have been by nature totally depraved, will not the readiness of our first parents to commit sin prove that they were totally depraved before they had ever sinned? Besides, many of the posterity of Adam have resisted the most powerful assaults of the Devil! If, then, we consider a failure to resist temptation a proof of total depravity, must we not, by parity of reasoning, consider the successful resistance of temptation a proof of perfect exemption from depravity? But each of these suppositions proves too much, and therefore proves nothing! consequently, the fact, that all men have sinned, affords no evidence of total hereditary depravity. But this by the way.

Having shown that the antideluvians had *corrupted themselves*, until every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually; and that they were blamed and destroyed for having *corrupted themselves*; we are prepared for the consideration of another text, much used as a proof of total universal depravity, *Isaiah* 1: 5, 6. "Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." In order that the reader may understand this subject, we will also quote the 4th verse. "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy one of Israel unto anger, they have gone away backward."

The prophet is here speaking of the children of Israel; and that they were as bad as he represents them, we can easily admit. The fourth verse however, informs us how they had become depraved. It calls them *corrupters!* Corrupters of whom? Why, each man was a *corrupter of himself*, and all were *corrupters of one another!* Need we repeat, that that which has been already *wholly corrupted* cannot be again corrupted! We do consider this proposition to be self-evident, and will not therefore attempt to prove it. Again, it is said, "they have *forsaken* the Lord," "they have *gone away* backwards.[*] Now, is it not evident that these persons received their wounds and their bruises, by forsaking the Lord, by going away backwards, by rebelling against him? Thus did their whole *head* become *sick*, and their whole *heart faint*. For this the Lord blames them. Not one word does he say, however, concerning Adam's "first sin." He blames them for their own sins, and not for Adam's. Whatever injury man may have received from Adam's *first sin*, is our misfortune, not our fault.

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[*] Are totally depraved persons in the favor of the Lord, and in a state of union with him? If not, how can such persons forsake him? How can a totally depraved person go away backwards? Away from what!! From total depravity!! This, then, must be an advance to purity! If by nature all men are totally depraved, they are by nature thrown as far *backward* as they can ever go, *that is, into total corruption!!*

"Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 58: 5. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Ps. 58: 3. "For I knew that thou wouldst deal treacherously and wast called a transgressor from the womb." Isa. 48: 8.

These passages are often quoted to prove the doctrine of total hereditary depravity. They do, however, by no means prove it. If we interpret them literally, and give them all the force, which, by any fair rules of interpretation they can be supposed to possess, they prove nothing more than that human nature has been *somewhat defiled* by Adam's sin: and this is a doctrine which we have not denied. There is certainly a great difference between being "shapen in iniquity," and being "wholly depraved in every faculty of the soul, and in every member of the body." A thing may be defiled, and yet not "wholly defiled," unclean, and yet not "wholly unclean!" But, that total depravity is not taught in these passages, we prove positively, by a declaration found in connexion with the passage last quoted. "Behold I have *refined* thee but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isa. 58: 10. Now, if by the sin of Adam those persons had been *wholly corrupted*; or, even if they had *wholly corrupted themselves* by their own sins, by what means could they have been *refined?* There was nothing to *refine!!!* Metals may be refined: but by no chemical process of which we have ever heard, can *mere dross be purified!!!*

We are, however, after all, of the opinion, that these passages are highly figurative. The orientalists were much disposed to the use of the most highly figurative language. David says, Psalms 22: 6, "I am a worm and no *man*:" and Isaiah says, "All nations are before God as *nothing*; and they are counted by him *less than nothing*, and *vanity*." Isa. 40: 17. The prophetic scriptures are full of figures such as these! Now, is there any man of sane mind, who by the first of these passages just quoted, would attempt to prove that *men* are not *men*, but *worms?* or, from the second passage, that *all the nations* are in *reality nothing?* nay *less* than *nothing?* We hesitate not to say that the Bible and common sense as much justify this interpretation, as that! We are told that "the wicked *go astray* from the womb, *speaking lies*." Not literally, however: for we know that an infant, for some time after its birth, can neither *speak truth nor falsehood*! Let the reader, therefore, apply a rule of interpretation to these scriptures, as liberal as that by which he would interpret David's words, where he says, "I am a worm and no man," and he can never consider them as proof of total hereditary depravity.

We have sometimes heard persons say, "ah! the scriptures declare that man is *born to evil*, as the sparks fly upward." We must, however, inform the reader, that this scripture, like many others, is of the home manufacture! There is a passage which says, that "Man is born to *trouble* as the sparks fly upward." Job, 5:7. This however, is another scripture hyperbole; for we know that, although men have many troubles, yet the most of them have many comforts. We have no doubt however, but that, if *evil* had been in the text, instead of *trouble*, it would have been used by many an erudite scripturian, as irresistible proof of total hereditary depravity; and yet, even if *evil*, instead of *trouble*, had been in the text, it would no more have proved total depravity, than, as it now stands, it proves, total, universal, and unceasing *trouble*.

"The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all *gone aside*, they are altogether *become filthy;* there is none that *doeth good*, no, *not one*." *Psalms*, 14: 2, 3. We shall give a declaration of David, found in the 106th Psalm, as explanatory of the above. "The land was *polluted with blood; thus were they defiled by their own works;* therefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his own people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance." The people *had polluted themselves* by wicked works; for this the Lord blamed them, not for "Adam's first sin."

But Paul says, that "we are by *nature the children of wrath* even as others." Ephe. 2: 3. Yes, and Paul also says, that "when the gentiles who have not the law, do by *nature* the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves." Rom. 2: 14. Can a gentile or any other person, by the aid of a *totally depraved nature,* do the things which are contained in the law? Many critics* are of the opinion that the word *nature,* as used by the apostle, in most instances signifies *custom.* Take for example; 1st Cor. 11: 14, "Doth not even *nature itself teach you,* that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him." The customs of the Corinthians taught them that it was a shame for a man to have long hair. So, the customs of the gentiles in so far as they had a knowledge of good and evil, enabled them to do the things contained in the law. When, however, they acted counter to the knowledge which they possessed, they became children of *wrath;* and, as all of them had sinned, the wrath of God was justly made manifest against them all. This appears to us, to be the meaning of the above text. *Nature,* in the sense in which *we* commonly use the word, certainly does not teach us that it is a shame for a man to have long hair; if it teaches us any thing on the subject, it is, that we should permit our hair to grow; for nature makes it grow; and surely, its teaching does not contradict its practice!! We conclude, therefore, that the apostle did not use the word nature, in the sense in which we commonly use it; but as synonymous with custom.† We do not define the word nature in this way however, because we think the passage in Ephesians to be contrary to the doctrine which we intend to substantiate. If we suppose all men to be in the *smallest measure* defiled by Adam's "first sin," we may also suppose them to be children of wrath, in the same *measure*. But, if the reader insists that the passage in Ephesians proves total hereditary depravity, we just ask him to inform us, how a being whose *nature is totally depraved* can do, by that *totally depraved nature*, the things which are contained in the law?

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* Dr. Adam Clark, &c.

† If the one of these passages proves that the gentiles were by nature totally depraved, because they are said to be by nature the

But we are also told that the unregenerated "are dead, in trespasses and sins." This is true: but what does it prove? A grain of wheat is said to be *dead*, although it germinates, and produces thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold! "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Now, does the death of a grain of wheat signify the total extinction of its vegetative principles? When a human body dies and lies cold and insensate in the grave, is it destitute of those principles

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children of wrath, the other proves with equal force, that they were by nature totally pure doing by nature the things contained in the law; for if non-conformity to the law of God, by nature, on the one hand proves total depravity, conformity thereto, by nature, must on the other hand prove total purity. Thus by parity of reasoning, is proved the strange paradox, that the gentiles were by nature, at the same time, totally depraved and totally pure!! But as the evidence in favor of these opposite conclusions, is equally strong, it follows, with the resistless force of demonstration, that the gentiles were neither *totally* depraved nor *totally* pure.

We often say that "*custom is a second nature*." The gentiles were by this nature, custom, the children of wrath. In further proof of this position, observe that Paul says, "and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." *Trespasses* and *sins* are both in the plural. But if this *death* had been superinduced by the *first sin* of Adam, then, the *singular* and not the *plural* would have been used—thus: "*dead in Adam's sin*"*!!!* As then original sin is *but one*, and Paul attributes their moral death to *many trespasses* and *sins*, we are driven to the conclusion that it was their own personal sins, and not Adam's sin, that brought them under the dominion of moral death. By "walking according to the course or custom of this world," they became children of wrath. Is not this *custom* or *second nature*, "the old man," whom *we are commanded* "TO PUT OFF?"

which will render it a fit subject of that physical operation, by which it will be resuscitated in the morning of the resurrection? Most certainly not! Well, if not, why should we say that a man *morally dead* is destitute of all those moral principles, which render him a fit subject of *moral operations*, by *moral means?* Persons who have been regenerated are said—Rom. 6: 11, to be "Dead indeed unto sin." But though a Christian is dead indeed unto sin, this death does not place him in a state, such as unfits him for being operated upon by those things which are productive of sin; why then should it be thought that a death in sin places its subject in a state, such as unfits him for being operated upon by those moral means, which are productive of righteousness? A person "dead to sin" feels many temptations—feels the law of sin and death in his members; why then, by parity of reasoning, may not a person "dead to righteousness" feel many strong inducements to the doing of good? The temptations of a Christian require not miraculous operations, in order to their production, though he is dead to sin; why, then, should miraculous operations be thought necessary to excite righteous emotions in the minds of those who are dead to righteousness? Now, as we do know that regenerate men do frequently feel strong inducements to evil, and that unregenerate men feel strong inducements to good, if the inducements to good felt by unregenerate men are not a proof that there is some good in them, the inducements to evil felt by regenerate men, cannot be taken as a proof that there is any evil in them. But, as the one is a proof that there is evil in regenerate men, the other is a proof that there is something good in unregenerate men; therefore unregenerate men, are not by nature totally depraved.

The word "death," is frequently used relatively. Paul says to Christians, "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."' Coll. 2: 3. Now, when Paul says, "ye are dead," he means, "ye are dead to sin:" that is, "ye are free from sin." "He that is dead is free from sin;"—does not serve sin. So, when a per son is said to be "dead in sin," "he is free from righteousness;" that is, "does not serve righteousness." So, also, when a person is said to be "dead to the law," the meaning is, that he is "free from the law:"—does not live in the performance of its obsolete ordinances. When a person is said to be "dead to the world," the meaning is, that, he is not conformed to it;—has lost his taste for its vanities and follies; and, "has been transformed by the renewing of his mind." In all these passages, the word "dead" is used relatively: that is, when a person is dead in relation to sin, he is alive in relation to righteousness, and *vice versa*, &c.

In scripture language, neither "*death*" nor "*life*," when these terms are used in relation to moral states and changes, can signify the extinction or revivification of any of our natural powers. As when a grain of wheat dies, its vegetative substance is transferred from one identity to another; so, when we die to sin and become alive unto righteousness, our natural powers are transferred from one moral sphere to another. Conversion consecrates, but does not annihilate our natural faculties: nor does it create new ones. Just as we have the same hands, feet, tongue &c. after conversion as before; so we have the same memory, judgment, imagination, &c. The faculties of our souls are brightened by conversion; the rust and mildew of sin are rubbed off; but no radical change is effected in them. The man, whose memory was good before conversion, will most probably have a good memory afterwards. The man, who, previously to conversion, was endued with a brilliant genius, will be a man of a brilliant genius after conversion. And now reader, mark this one thing: you will find a great deal of human nature in man, after, as well as before conversion!!!!

All the above observations go to show, that men are not by nature what the creeds represent them to be. By practice, we admit, that many of them are bad enough! And, as we have admitted that human nature may have received *some* defilement from the "first sin of Adam," *so, we will not* deny that men, by personal acts of wickedness, and by long perseverance in a wicked course, may *totally deprave themselves!* Of this we intend to write afterwards. But to us it does appear preposterous to represent all mankind as dead, in the sense of the creeds! Yes, and they will *preach* to them too!!! What! *preach* to men who can neither *see* nor *hear!!!* Why not go to the graveyard, and say, "*Lazarus come forth!!!* Yes, and they will tell sinners that, "*they can do nothing but sin!*" and then, cry, "*O sinners repent! repent!*" "*You can and you can't,*" seems to be the order of the creeds!!! But we must guard against severity.

We now conclude this chapter. We have examined the strongest of those texts, by which it is thought that the doctrine of total hereditary depravity can be proved; and, if we mistake not, have shown that the most of them rather disprove than prove it. The reader is, however, requested to favor us with his attention to other arguments, which we intend to adduce. If the Lord will be our helper, we will make total hereditary depravity appear so unreasonable and antiscriptural, that none but those who condemn truths to which they cannot reply, or which they cannot refute, shall ever believe it in time to come. We ask of our reader only a candid hearing and fair play.

REASONS FOR NOT BELIEVING THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.

1st. *If this doctrine be admitted to be true, then, it must be admitted, that the worst of the unregenerate are as good as the best.* The Baptist creed declares that by Adam's first sin, "we were made *opposite to all good,* and *wholly inclined* to *all evil.*" And the Presbyterian says that our "*whole nature was corrupted*" by this sin. This, then, according to these creeds, is the natural condition of every unregenerate man! Now, if this is true, is not every unregenerate man as bad as Satan? Reader, you must either deny this doctrine of the creeds, or admit that all unregenerate men are as corrupt as the Devil! Yes, mothers, those smiling babes, which with delight so exquisite you press to your fond and sympathizing bosoms, are, according to these creeds, *wholly corrupt* and *wholly inclined to all evil.* Except you can imagine some person to exist, who is *more* than *wholly* inclined to all evil, you cannot imagine any person to exist, who is worse than these creeds represent your babes to be! Are you prepared for this? Can you look on the face of your child, and then, with a good conscience, subscribe a creed which contains so monstrous a doctrine? We are astonished that rational men ever admitted so uncouth an absurdity! What! must we look upon our unregenerate friends, relatives, and neighbors as *wholly inclined to all evil?* Must the husband consider his kind, his affectionate, his generous, though unregenerate wife, as a Devil incarnate? Rather would we say, that among the unregenerate, there is a great diversity of dispositions and characters. Not more numerous are the tints in nature, than are the shades of human character. It is probable that no two children have ever yet been born into the world, with precisely the same disposition. Their dispositions probably differ as much as do their countenances; which could not be, were they all wholly inclined to all evil; for then the dispositions of all of them would be precisely alike! that is, totally depraved!!!

That all unregenerate men, are not equally, and consequently not totally depraved or wholly inclined to all evil, we will now prove from the scriptures, by a few, out of the many passages which might be adduced. Paul says that "Evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse.*" Now, it must be admitted that evil men and seducers are unregenerate men. How then can these men, by nature totally depraved, become *worse and worse?* Worse than totally depraved? Worse than wholly inclined to all evil? Impossible! Every reader *who is not* blind, can certainly perceive that if bad men can become *worse*, they are not by nature *totally depraved!*

But we have other proofs to the point. "And the Lord said thy people, (meaning the Jewish nation,) which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have *corrupted themselves.*" Deut. 9: 12. Moses says that "They have *corrupted themselves;* their spot is not the spot of his children." Deut. 32: 5. But more fully to the point, is the following declaration from the mouth of Moses: "For I know that after my death you will *utterly corrupt* yourselves." Deut. 21: 29. Need we inform the reader that Moses certainly did not consider the Jewish Nation as *utterly corrupt*, at the time in which he spoke these words? He charges them with corrupting themselves, and evidently supposes them to be in a state of *progressive* corruption, which would eventuate in *utter* or *total corruption* after his death. Like the evil men and seducers of Paul, they were waxing worse and worse, and might finally become totally depraved!

If the reader is not yet convinced, we will give him one more testimony, which we think irresistible. "Thou also which hast judged thy sisters,(Sodom and Samaria,) bear thine own shame, for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they, *they are more righteous* than thou." Ezekiel 16: 52. Now, gentle reader, if this testimony does not convince you, that all unregenerate men are not totally depraved and that some unregenerate men are worse than others, we shall despair of ever convincing you of any thing!—we shall recommend medicine, or a physician, as more suitable to your complaint than testimony! The unregenerate Sodomites were *more righteous* than the Jews!!! Except one mass of total corruption can be more righteous than another, the Sodomites were not totally corrupt; and if the unregenerate Sodomites were not totally corrupt, the doctrine of total hereditary depravity is false!

2nd. ***We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because we do know that man is a rational being.*** The scriptures speak of the reason of man, the reason of God, and of the christian religion, as possessing congenial principles. "Come now," says God to man "and let us reason together." The result of this reasoning was to be the cancelling of the sins of the man wh would reason with his Maker. "Though your sins b like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though the be red as crimson, they shall be as wool."—Men, b acting reasonably, do not act in oppositon to God. Th reason of God is the highest reason in the universe, an is, in so far as revelation has made it known, a guide fo the exercise of our reason. When the reason of mar which may be denominated the mind's eye, is illuminated by the revelation which has proceeded from the reason of God, and our soul, body and spirit are actuate and controlled by the rays of this celestial light, we become "imitators of God." Under no other circumstances can we be said to act reasonably! Obedience to thi revelation is hence declared to be "our reasonable service." Hence also it is said, that "Paul reasoned wit Felix." The exercises of Paul's mind, as well as th articulations of his organs of speech, were legitimat productions of God's own revelations; and, therefore, rational exercises; things, which they could not have bee had they been in any measure counter to the dictates the divine Reason!

If, however, the reason of man is totally depraved—if it is a mere satanic germ—if it is not that noble principle which we have just represented it to be, how has come to pass, that its legitimate exercises are so entirel compatible with the exercises of the divine reason? the reason of unregenerate men is *wholly deprave* would not its legitimate exercises be open and etern rebellion against God?* But that the exercise of the reason of unregenerate men is not rebellion against God,

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*If the reason of man is totally depraved, then, while ever he ac in conformity with it, he must act counter to the reason of Go There must, in this case, be a fearful discordance between hum and divine reason! If then this discordance really exists, ma in order to act compatibly with divine reason, must act counter his own! Paul, therefore, ought to have prayed, to be deliver from "*reasonable* and wicked men"!!! and the Christian Religi *ought to have been denominated," our unreasonable service"!!*

evident from the words of Paul, in which he prays to be delivered from *unreasonable* and wicked men." These men were, it seems, wicked, because they were *unreasonable*—refused to render to God their "*reasonable service;*"—therefore, it is as clear as demonstration, that the reason of man, except he be an idiot, is not by nature totally depraved; and, if not, then human nature is not totally depraved.

It has been well said by a writer of celebrity, that "no man is against reason, until he finds that reason is against him." Even the Roman Catholics appeal to reason, when it favors, or seems to favor their doctrines. But when they attempt to prove trans-substantiation, reason is divorced and carnalized, because it cannot be made to bow to and reverence this monstrous dogma. So it is with many others. They repudiate reason, only when it raises its faithful voice against their absurdities! Did I say absurdities? Yes! What absurdity is greater, or more irrational, than that a priest, a sinful man, holds Jesus Christ between his fingers in a wafer; perhaps only equalled by the more popular absurdity, that all men are by nature wholly corrupt, but yet, that some are more corrupt than others; and to this absurdity permit us to add another, that men, who are totally corrupt, may become worse and worse!!!

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." That which is sometimes called the "soul's eye," and sometimes "the discursive faculty," is here called "the eyes of your understanding." The gospel was the light by which this "eye" was illuminated, and was as well adapted to this moral or mental organ, as physical light is to our natural eye. Hence it became a medium through which they saw or understood the things of God. But, had this "eye" been dead, that is, blind by nature, of what benefit could the light have been to them? We learn from the testimony of Jesus Christ, that the Jews, in order to avoid seeing, when the truth was presented to them, resorted to an astonishing expedient! It was just this! They "shut their eyes"!! Yes, said Jesus, "*your eyes ye have* *closed*"—"lest ye should be *converted*"!! But, if their "eyes" were "dead," they could have seen as well with them *shut* as *open*!!!

We do not intend to deny that men, by a long continuance in the practice of wickedness, may render their mental "eye" unfit for the reception of moral light. We do in fact believe this doctrine. We think that the mental, as well as the physical eye, may become blind: this however is not its natural condition, excepting where persons are born in a state of idiocy.* We conclude, therefore, that, as men are reasonable beings, and as the faculty of reason is an attribute in the exercise of which we imitate God and render him our services, those who are possessed of this attribute are not the subjects of total hereditary depravity.

3d. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because unregenerate men are capable of the exercise of conscience.* We will present but two passages, out of the many, in proof of this point. 1 Tim. 4: 2. "Having their *conscience seared* with a hot iron." Rom. 2: 15. "Their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their *thoughts* the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another."

We shall not attempt the arguing of this question metaphysically. That men have a conscience from a very early period of their lives, is a fact, which requires no other proof than every man's own consciousness. We have indeed seen one man, and but one, who informed us, that he had never felt one compunctious throb for any of his evil doings; but, we did not believe him:—had we believed him, we should have viewed him as a monster! We think also that we do not mistake, when we say that those persons who are unhackneyed in the ways of vice, are more tender in conscience and more capable of its vigorous exercise, than are older and more hardened sinners, and that correct information or a knowledge of the truth is also a pre-requisite to its healthful and vigorous exercise. The gentiles, who had not the law, had, nevertheless, some knowledge of good and evil; and if any of them were for the most part destitute of this knowledge, we have a reason for it in the first chapter of Romans. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God;" "and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up." &c. In proportion to the true knowledge which they possessed, was the ability with which their conscience was endowed to be a faithful "witness;" but if, "not liking to retain God in their knowledge," they persisted in refusing to hearken to this inward monitor, it became 'seared with a hot iron,' its remonstrances were hushed, and its unhappy subjects given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind! Nothing is more certain, we think, than that young persons, when they begin to run into the criminal excesses of the baser sort of men, experience the most exquisite twinges of conscience; twinges, which, after hardening themselves in crime, they never again experience.

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*The intellect of an idiot, is physically, not morally depraved.

But, on the supposition that the doctrine of total hereditary depravity is true, these things could not so be. If all men are by nature totally depraved, can the *heart be hardened?* Can the *conscience be seared?* Upon the hypothesis of total hereditary depravity, is not the heart and conscience of the novitiate in sin as much depraved as are the heart and conscience of the veriest reprobate? If the creeds are true, are not all unregenerate men from their birth "wholly corrupt," and "inclined to evil continually?" Where then shall we find in unregenerate men those conscientious throbbings, those deep convictions, those midnight sighings, which, perhaps, all unregenerate men have felt? Does not the existence of these feelings and emotions indicate the existence of something in the nature of man which is not wholly corrupt? In what does conscience inhere? Where is its substratum? On what foundation does it stand? What is that which feels so acutely—which aches so horribly, if the whole nature of man is morally dead? Does conscience grasp mere rottenness and corruption, and make it feel horror and remorse in the contemplation of sin, when the whole man is but sin personified? Impossible! If the doctrine of total native depravity were true, instead of feeling remorse for sin, we should thirst after it incessantly, and that too, with intense and irresistible desire; and sin would be so congenial with our whole nature, that in no part of it could there be any repugnance to sin; and, consequently, there could be no conscience! * Suppose, if you please, a person to have so far depraved himself, as to be "past feeling," would this man be more than totally depraved? You answer in the negative. Well then, it follows irresistibly, that those who are not yet "past feeling," whose conscience is not totally "seared," are not yet totally depraved.

4th. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because Christians are said to have been saved "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit;" Titus* 3: 5—*and because the gospel process of salvation is said to be "like the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap."* If human nature is "wholly corrupt," it is neither a proper subject of a *washing*, nor of a *refining!* Can you refine a mass which is wholly dross? Can you wash a mass clean which is wholly corrupt?—Certainly this is impossible! For if you remove by washing the whole of the corrupt or unclean particles, there will be no part of the mass remaining!! A woman may wash a polluted garment until it shall be clean, because the material and texture of the garment are good; and a refiner may remove by the refining process, the dross from a mass of metal; but, if there were no metal in this, nor substantial material in that, these processes must prove infallibly abortive! So would it be with human nature, were it 'wholly corrupt.' Remove if you please, by any process, all the corrupt particles from a man who is "wholly corrupt," and no one particle of the man will remain!!!! He will have been utterly decomposed!!! Nor can this argument be eluded by the phrase, the "Renewing of the Holy Spirit." For, if human nature is indeed "wholly corrupt," there is nothing in it capable of being renewed!! We know that the scriptures speak of "a new creation;" but then we do also at the same time know that an absolutely new creation is not salvation. A metallic vessel may be made new, by melting and casting it into a proper mould; dross however, cannot be so renewed—nothing but metal is capable of this process. Just so it is with human nature. It must be melted by the love of Heaven: it must be rendered perfectly penitent; then it may be cast into the gospel mould, and it will come out of this mould clean and brilliant—properly a new vessel! But if human nature is "wholly corrupt"—if it is wholly dross, by no process of melting and casting, can it be renewed! For it will be dross, nothing but dross, through every process! And if, instead of melting, refining, and casting the old material, you melt and cast a new one, you have not refined nor saved the old; therefore, if human nature is wholly corrupt, and if total corruption cannot be renewed or saved, then there is in truth no such thing as salvation! This argument, had we but this one, might we think suffice to prove to all men, the utter futility of the doctrine of total hereditary depravity.

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*Paul says, Acts 23: 1. "Men and brethren I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." The Apostle, here, refers to the whole of his past life. Now, if Paul, anterior to his conversion was totally depraved, how could he have had a good conscience?—Again: Can total sinfulness feel remorse? Can a totally wicked or depraved conscience rebuke a sinner for his wickedness? Surely this would be the Devil chiding sin!! Surely this would be Satan divided against himself!!!

5th. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because Jesus assimilates human nature to meal, and his Gospel to leaven.* "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matthew 13: 33. "Let your light" said Jesus, "so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may be constrained to glorify your father who is in heaven." Thus will "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord ultimately cover the whole earth;" yes, through the instrumentality of the saints, all the nations will be enlightened;—the whole mass will be leavened in pursuance to the benevolent designs of the founder of the christian religion.

But, if human nature is totally depraved, why did Jesus assimilate it to meal, and his gospel to leaven?—And why did he evidently suppose human nature to be so very susceptible of good impressions, as to be capable of being constrained to glorify God, through the influence of the good works of christians? If human nature is what the creeds represent it to be, as soon might a heap of ashes be leavened by ordinary leaven, as human nature through the influence of christian example! But as Jesus Christ does evidently and most irresistibly teach us to influence or leaven men in this way, as well as by the word, we are warranted in using this, as another reason for not believing the doctrine of total hereditary depravity.

9th. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because God is said "to love the world."* But if God loves the world, and the world is "wholly corrupt," God loves total corruption; or, which is the same thing, he loves that which is "wholly corrupt!!" Is the reader prepared for this? We shudder at the idea!! Is it within the power—is it consistent with the nature of any being, or rather, is it not contrary to the nature of all beings, to love any object, where there is nothing in the object beloved congenial with the nature of the lover of it? "Sin," for instance, is a thing which the "soul of the Lord hates." Why? Because of its uncongeniality! Because of its total contrariety to every principle of the Divine nature! But, if the nature of man is "wholly corrupt," it must be wholly sinful; and if wholly sinful, it must be wholly hateful* to God; there-

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*Calvin's Institutes, Book 4th, chap. 15th, sec. 10, page 628.—"Therefore, these two points are distinctly to be marked, namely, that we being in all parts of our nature defiled and corrupted, are already, for such corruption ONLY, holden worthily condemned, and convicted before God, &c. yea and VERY *infants themselves bring their own damnation with them from their mother's womb;* who although they have not yet brought forth the fruits of their iniquity, yet have the seeds thereof inclosed within them; *yea their whole nature is a certain seed of sin;* therefore, it cannot but be *hateful* and *abominable* to God; the faithful are certified that by *baptism this* damnation is taken away from them."

fore, if human nature is "wholly corrupt," God cannot love it; but must hate it with a perfect hatred!! As then God "loved the world," he must have seen in human nature an intrinsic value, rendering it worthy of being loved.

Will any person say that human nature does not possess intrinsic value? How often have we heard even the advocates for the total corruption of human nature tell sinners "that their immortal never dying souls were worth more than a thousand worlds." Now, if human souls are so valuable as this declaration imports, and are wholly corrupt too, corruption is certainly valuable!! We may also say that the price given for the redemption of human nature was far, very far too great, on the supposition of total depravity; for if indeed human nature is wholly corrupt, the redemption of it would be but the redemption or purchasing of that, which is in itself valueless!

But, however much value we may suppose human nature to possess, we have no reason for the exercise of pride. God is the author of our nature; and, therefore, shall have the praise for all its excellencies, however great or numerous they may be. We think that many persons who abuse human nature, believe that they are thereby honoring God; because, they are representing him as *stooping so* as to redeem—what? *A mass of sin!!!* At what price? At the great price of the blood of his Son! But this is not honoring God; it is rather degrading him. And it is also degrading human nature most perniciously, as we shall show afterwards.

7th. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because a state such as this would not only unfit us for the operation of the word but for the operation of the spirit also!* The operation of the spirit upon human nature, if it were wholly corrupt, would be like

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Thus writes the great Calvin! "The whole nature of infants," he tells us, "is a seed of sin, and cannot but be hateful and abominable to God." Hence we are justified, even by Calvin, in saying that, if the nature of man is wholly corrupt, it is wholly hateful to God!

the operation of the rays of the sun upon a carcase! I
what way a spiritual operation could be at all benefici
to a person placed in a situation such as this, is to o
mind wholly inconceivable. According to the riddle
Sampson, meat could come out of the eater, and swe
out of the strong; that is, honey could come out of the ca
case of the dead lion, because it had been previously d
posited there: but how something can be extracted fro
nothing, would puzzle a Jesuit to explain. We mak
these observations here, in order to inform those wh
charge us with denying the operations of the Holy Spiri
that their own much loved doctrine of total heredita
depravity would, if it were true, render all spiritual o
erations useless; for it could bring nothing good out
our nature, because, (will you hear the reason plai
ly?) upon your hypothesis there is nothing good in it!

8th. *We do not believe the doctrine of total hered
tary depravity, because, if it is true, we cannot percei
how all infants can be saved.* Mr. Fisher, on the Shor
er Catechism, asks, "Is original sin damning?" and a
swers, "most undoubtedly!" Now, if original sin is dam
ing, and infants are under the guilt of that sin, we ca
not perceive how those infants, that die while und
the guilt of original sin, can be saved. Besides, Calvi
ists teach that all the elect were elected unto everlasti
life before the foundation of the world, and that those wh
will not finally be saved, were not elected. Now su
pose some of the non-elect to die in infancy, could the
be saved? This is so palpable a case, that we thin
ourselves warranted in saying that the Calvinists mu
either teach that God does not permit the non-elect
die in infancy, or that the non-elect who die in infanc
will be damned: they have no other alternative! O
Methodist brethren may, perhaps, manage this matt
rather better than the Calvinists: and yet, we must sa
that some things in the Discipline look rather suspiciou
Their praying that the infant "*may be delivered fro*
the wrath of God," pa. 104—and that "*God would*
his own bounteous mercy" give to the child "*that goo*
thing which by nature it cannot have;" and that it (th

baby) "*might be baptized with the Holy Spirit,*" are things which we shall leave for them to explain! But, as they pray that the infant *may be delivered from the wrath of God,* when they are about to sprinkle it, we cannot forbear asking what would be the consequence were the child to die previously to its obtaining this deliverance from God's wrath? There is something wrong here, most assuredly!! We are far from supposing that any of the Methodists believe in infant damnation!—the creed we think is in the wrong!! We would, therefore, advise them, either to alter it, or to throw it away!! The New Testament is just as good;—we think that it is a little better than the Methodist Discipline!! Reader what thinkest thou?

9th. *We do not believe in the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, because, on the supposition that all mankind have been depraved to this extent by the first sin of Adam, they are not accountable creatures.* An idiot is not an accountable being. Why? Because he has no moral powers! But as well might an idiot be damned for want of conformity to the divine law, as any other unregenerate person, if unregenerate persons in general have no more moral power than idiots. God has told us that "he is not a hard master, reaping where he has not sown." He only requires the improvement of that which he gives us—whether one talent, two, five, or none! If, then, he has not given to unregenerate men an ability to obey him, they are not accountable!

God, from the beginning of the world, has been exceedingly careful to cherish within his creatures a principle of conscious accountability. Hence, he placed the very first man under law, and required of him strict obedience; and, from that to the present time, he has been cherishing the very same principle in all people, to whom his word has been administered: and his service has always been "a reasonable service." Moses, the Prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, all cherished this principle—all talked to man, not concerning human inability, but the necessity of obedience. Read Christ's sermon on the mount. Does he not preach to the people, as if he thought they could obey? And do not the Apostles, in their sermons in the book of Acts, evidently suppose that their hearers had the power of obedience? We shall perhaps be told that man had power enough given him in Adam to obey God's law perfectly; but that as Adam was our head and representative, and lost that power by disobedience, his posterity are infinitely to blame!! This however is altogether gratuitous. Not the shadow of a proof have we ever seen of the truth of this assumption. The supposing that God gave to Adam, to have and to hold, in the capacity of a representative, our power of individual obedience, is, if possible, worse than transubstantiation! But suppose, if you please, for one moment, this to be a fact! Will this fact justify God in keeping the whole affair a profound secret from his creatures, while he is continually importuning them to obey his commandments, and pretending as though they had power to obey. Add to this, that according to Calvinism, God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and consequently foreordained the sin of Adam, and that all mankind should lose, by his sin, the power of personal obedience. Strange! strange! if this is the case, that God should be so infinitely angry with our helpless race!! But as in the parable of the talents, we are taught that God is not a hard master—that he requires of every one according to—not above his ability, we are warranted in the conclusion, that the Calvinistic doctrine of human inability is a figment of some visionary brain, and not the doctrine of the Bible. We do not believe, however, that human ability is self-originated. God, in a measure, such as his wisdom dictates, bestows it upon every accountable being; so that it is all of grace; yes, if you please, it is all of *sovereign grace!!*

THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE MAY SUPPOSE HUMAN NATURE TO HAVE BEEN INJURED, BY "THE FIRST SIN OF ADAM."

"On the day thou eatest thereof," said God to Adam, "thou shalt surely die." God, however, after Adam had partaken of the prohibited fruit, granted him a respite, through the Messiah, so that he did not die a temporal death until several hundreds of years afterwards. We conclude that the death threatened was temporal, because there was but ONE death mentioned by the Almighty, and we can prove that that ONE was a temporal death. "For since by man *came death*, by man also came the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15: 21. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin; and so *death* passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5: 12. These passages speak of temporal death, or the death of the body, and declare this death to have fallen upon mankind in consequence of the first sin of Adam: therefore, as there was but one death threatened, and as temporal death, according to the above scriptures, did result from the first sin, this one death must have been temporal.

Before Adam had sinned, he was permitted to partake of the fruits of all the trees of the garden, excepting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was consequently permitted, before he had sinned, to partake of the fruit of the tree of life; for *it* was one of the trees of the garden. Now, whether we consider this tree as literal or figurative, the fruit of it had virtue, by which to perpetuate human life. This we learn from the words used by the Almighty, when he expelled our first parents from the garden. "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the *tree of life, and eat, and live forever;* therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground whence he was taken." Gen. 3: 22. 23. Thus we perceive, that by the partaking of the fruit of the tree of life, Adam might have *lived forever*, but being cut off from the life-*perpetuating* fruit, he must ultimately die. He was left, if we may use the expression, to his merely animal resources; and, as these were all limited, they must in a limited time become exhausted. Then, death ensued. And we may add, that diseases must have been the precursors of this death. For being destitute of the health-inspiring efficacy of the life-perpetuating fruit, he was as liable to disease as to death; in a word, was made liable to death through disease; for, were there no diseases, there would be no natural death.

But not only was Adam separated from the tree of life, as the consequence of the first sin; all mankind were separated also. Adam, in this respect, is represented as standing at the head of the whole human family, so that his sin became theirs, and his punishment likewise! Hence the declaration of the Apostle, "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men because *all have sinned.*" Hence, also, it is said in the same chapter, that "death reigned by one man's offence," and that "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." The meaning is, that through the sin of the first man Adam, God passed sentence of temporal death upon all men. But, still, there is no injustice in this procedure; for God has given to all men as much in the second Adam as they lost by the first. Hence it is said by the Apostle, "For as by Adam all die, even so by Christ shall all be made alive." As we lost temporal life and health by the first Adam, without any fault of our own, so we shall receive temporal health and life in the second Adam, without any righteousness of our own. As, therefore, it was temporal, and not eternal life, which we lost in Adam without any fault of our own, so it will be temporal, and not eternal life, which all those who have no obedience of their own will gain in Jesus Christ. Those alone, "who receive an *abundance of grace*, and of the gift of righteousness, will *reign in life* by Jesus Christ."

As, however, this is a subject of some difficulty and much importance, we must endeavor to be more explicit. We have said that we lost only temporal life in Adam. *The life* which Adam lost, must have been that of which temporal death deprived him; and must consequently have been the life of the body. Now, if the life which Adam lost, was the same that his posterity lost through him, it follows irresistibly that we lost our temporal life through the sin of Adam; and as God does not threaten Adam with more than one death, it also follows, just as conclusively, that we lost *but one life* by the sin of Adam. Some of the creeds inform us that death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal, were the penalty of the Adamic sin; but, as the Bible mentions only one death as the penalty of the first sin, we have no right to say that there were *three!* Nor will it do to object that Adam was to die the threatened death on the day of trangression, and that, as he did not die a temporal death on that day, a temporal death was not meant. For we have already proved that Adam did subsequently die a temporal death on account of his first sin, and that as he was threatened with but one death, *this was that one;* therefore as to the respite, God did certainly grant it; nor can any valid objection be urged against his so doing. God told Jonah to say to the Ninevites, "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But they repented and God did not destroy them. A similar method of divine procedure is conspicuous in many of the dealings of God with his creatures. That it is best for God to act in this way, in many cases, his having so acted is a satisfactory proof.

It may, however, be said, that "the life, which Adam lost by temporal death, would have been eternal if he had never sinned." This we grant. Nay, more; the life of a flower would be eternal, if it were never to die; and day would be eternal if there were no night.

But we said that as we lost temporal, and not eternal life in Adam, without any fault of our own, so, without obedience of our own, we can gain nothing more than the same temporal life, in Jesus Christ. This, however, must be understood with some limitations; for infants and all other persons who are not capable of obedience are exceptions to this rule. As by Adam, we all die a *temporal death*, even so by Christ shall we all be made partakers of that temporal life, of which the sin of Adam deprived us. Now, as infants have no personal sin, it will follow that when they shall have been made alive in the resurrection, they will be in a perfectly saved and holy state. Those also who shall have committed personal sins, but who previously to death shall have obtained pardon, will be in a saved and holy state; but those who at death shall not have been pardoned, will in the resurrection be in an unsaved and unholy state; they will arise with all their sins upon their heads. Hence the necessity of obedience, if we would possess eternal life.

In accordance with this doctrine we have many apostolic exhortations. "To them that seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life shall be given." "Fight the good fight of faith, that you may lay hold on eternal life." "Laying up a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, for they shall have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers. &c. shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death."

These are only a few, of the many scriptures of this sort to be found in the New Testament. If, then, these scriptures are to be credited, eternal life cannot be obtained by any person capable of obedience, who will not through obedience seek for it. "Jesus," Paul tells us, "has become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." The persons who by obedience obtain the appellation, "overcomers," will inherit eternal life: but the fearful and unbelieving will inherit the burning lake, or second death!

The conclusions, then, to which from the preceding premises we must come, are these: that, in the resurrection, all will be made alive by Christ; "but every man in his own order," or band. One band will be composed of those who will come forth to the resurrection of life, and the other, of those who will come forth to the resurrection of damnation. All the evils which Adam brought upon the human family will be removed; so that, if men had not by their own personal acts committed sin, the whole family of man would be saved. But, as many will, in the morning of the resurrection, by reason of their own acts, be found in a sinful state, they will, even after having been restored to all that they had lost in Adam, die the second death! while the righteous will reach forth their hands to the life-perpetuating fruit of the tree of life, "which stands in the midst of the Paradise of God," *and eat and live forever!!*

We think that this subject is now tolerably clear. Still, however, we fear that there is one difficulty in the mind of the reader. "How," he will ask, "can men receive life through Christ, and yet that life not be in its own essence eternal?" We answer that the life of the righteous will be perpetuated eternally by the tree of life, and will therefore be eternal. The scriptures no where teach us that the life which the righteous will possess, is independently eternal; if it were so, we can see no reason why the obtaining of access to the tree of life should be esteemed a privilege of so very exalted a character.

The scriptures teach us that "God only hath immortality." He is the only being in the universe who possesses within himself the essence of indissoluble life. The saints, then, will possess eternal life by derivation; and the medium, through which they will derive it, is the tree of life.

If the reader argues that we lost either spiritual or eternal life in Adam, he is stranded!! For we have proved, that whatever life we lost in Adam will be restored by Jesus Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ will all be made alive." Now, if men die a spiritual death in Adam, without any act of their own, they will be made spiritually alive in Jesus Christ, without any act of their own; for as we die in Adam, in the same sense and to the same extent, shall all men be made alive in Jesus Christ! But, if all men shall be made spiritually alive in Jesus Christ, then all men will be saved. Thus is our opponent placed between Scylla and Charybdis! If he say we lost *spiritual or eternal life* in Adam, we prove *its* restoration in Christ, and our opponent is ingulphed in Universalism: but if he deny that in Adam we lost either *spiritual* or *eternal life*, his doctrine of total depravity falls to the ground.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In the preceding chapter, we proved that temporal death, and the long direful catalogue of diseases to which human nature is incident, have resulted from the first sin of Adam. It may now be asked—"Are these the only evils which that sin has produced?" We think not. We are of the opinion, that the minds and the affections of Adam's posterity have been disordered by his first sin. Upon no other principle, can we account for *idiocy*, mental and physical *deformity*, &c. Some men have the most retentive memory, and scarcely any judgment; others a very sound judgment and little memory. Among men, there is an infinite diversity in these respects; and we know of no cause to which to attribute these evils, but the sin of Adam.

Almost all physiologists and metaphysicians, we believe, admit that intellect depends upon organization. The human body is the organ upon which the human spirit performs; but, if this organ has been disordered, the result of the performance will be so likewise.—Hence the human spirit which dwells in an idiot, although, perhaps, as perfect as that which dwelt in Sir Isaac Newton, can exhibit but very imperfect marks of intellection. The fault is in the instrument, not in the performer! The instrument having been shattered by some calamitous stroke, refuses to send forth those melodious notes which the same performer would cause to arise from a better instrument.

If, then, intellection depends upon organization, the only question is, whether our organization has been injured by the first Adamic sin. But this point has, in effect, been already proved. It has been proved, that temporal death is the effect of that sin: and, if temporal death, then all diseases,—and, therefore, we may now say, if diseases, the want of a proper physical and mental organization, and, consequently, the want of perfect intellection.

It must be obvious to every discerning mind, that a shock so powerful as to bring the whole race of man to the grave, and to render us liable to every species of disease, must have been sufficiently powerful to impair our physical and mental organization. But, if this is the fact, "how," it may be asked, "has it happened, that all men have not been equally affected by it?" We answer, that as the diseases to which we are incident, are controlled and directed by innumerable circumstances, so are all the influences of the Adamic sin controlled and directed by circumstances. Hence, though death temporal is the effect of the first sin, yet some persons die in infancy, while others endure the storm until old age; some, also, die of one disease, and some of another. The stream of evil influence springing out of the Adamic transgression, in flowing its downward course through time, has been divided into innumerable rills, according to the configuration of circumstances, if we may use this expression; and to this fact is to be attributed all the diversity of its effects and operations. In one case, it produces a monstrous birth; in another, an idiot; in another, a hare lip; in another, a crooked foot; in another, a hump-back. In one, a defective memory; in another, a defective judgment; in another a redundancy of passion. Thus, every possible diversity of deformity, mental and physical, has been and may be produced. But, had not man been cut off from the health-inspiring and life-perpetuating tree, its healthful fruit would have been a preventive against the origin of this evil stream; so that, mentally and physically, the organization of the whole race of man would have been complete.

We said, that in many men there is a redundancy of passion: perhaps, it may also be said, that there is a general derangement of our passions. Further than this, as it regards the human passions, we cannot believe man to have been injured by the first sin of Adam.

The advocates for total hereditary depravity, do the human appetites and passions much injustice. We know of no natural appetite nor passion belonging to our nature, which is not, in itself, good; and which, being directed into a proper channel, is not calculated to subserve our best interests. We could not spare one of them without injury. The mere existence of our passions is not sin. Sin originates in the running of our passions into improper channels—in the not curbing or restraining them. Upon this principle do we account for the origin of all moral evil.

Adam and Eve had their appetites and passions, previously to the commission of the first sin. Had they not possessed passions, they could not have been susceptible of being tempted. Their susceptibility of temptation, however, seems to have been nearly, if not quite, as great as that of their posterity! Adam, it is presumed, loved Eve before he had sinned. It is also certain, that he possessed an appetite for eating and drinking. In short, it is probable, that our first parents were the subjects of all the passions, appetites and emotions, which exist in their posterity; except, only, those emotions which originate in a consciousness of guilt—these they could not have experienced until after they had sinned.

That the running of our passions and appetites in improper channels, and not the mere existence of them, is sinful, ought to be, to every rational mind, from the following considerations, obvious. The appetite for eating is not sinful, until it amounts to gluttony: the appetite for drinking is not sinful, until it arises to intemperance: the passion of fear is virtuous, when we fear the proper object: the passion of hatred, also, is virtuous, when properly directed: and the same may be said of all our passions and appetites. Like fire, they are good *servants, but* bad masters—or like the smooth waters of some gently flowing river, are productive of good, until they overflow their banks; but in the time of inundation, bear down and destroy every thing in their progress.

But, in order to make, if possible, this subject more obvious, suppose a human being divested of all his present appetites, emotions and passions; of what good action, of what noble performance would he be capable?—Just none at all!!! He could neither love nor hate, fear nor hope, joy nor sorrow; he could have no wish, no desire, no motive. In insensibility he would surpass all stoical apathy; he would no more be capable of performing any of those actions, to which he is now almost irresistibly prompted, and which are inseparably connected with his well being, than is inanimate matter. The inevitable conclusion then is, that our natural appetites and passions are not in themselves sinful—they are good in themselves, and are consequently productive of good in every case, in which their motions are regulated by the laws of truth. We ought therefore to govern, not annihilate them. We shall have use for them every hour of our lives. Let us therefore subject them to the strict discipline of the law of the Lord. Let them be chastened, and let them be consecrated to his service, and they will not only prove highly beneficial to us, but honorable to him who made us.

We have seen persons, whose minds had been so perverted by the monkish doctrine of total hereditary depravity, that when they beheld a child crying or fretting, they imagined that these were but the exhibitions of its depravity! Our conclusion however is very different. Some of the appetites and passions of children are very strong; and as their reasoning faculty has not developed itself, they are destitute of those principles, which must be exerted in order to self government; hence they do not possess this power. Their passions, consequently, have over them unlimited control; they are mere creatures of feeling and act their feelings, whether good or bad, upon all occasions. Hence the necessity of moral and religious education, by which they shall be taught the principles of self government; and hence, also, we may say, the necessity of all the means of salvation through the gospel, without which children could not be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Very great care ought to be taken by parents and guardians, not only to give a right direction to the principles of which the nature of children is composed, but also to prevent them from contracting bad habits. There are artificial as well as natural appetites. Children ought on no occasion to be permitted to create such appetites, nor to deprave their natural ones by any kind of excessive indulgence. If these rules were observed, there would not be so many *abusers* of human nature, and we may add, nor *spoilers* of human nature! Children are, in most instances, destroyed in a moral point of view, by the irrational manner in which they are raised, and then their nature is abused, because it did not produce fruits, the seeds of which were never sown in their minds!

The reader will perceive, by a candid attention to the contents of this chapter, that we are of the opinion that the human race has received a very large injury from the first sin of Adam; but not enough *wholly to corrupt it.* We cannot—we never can admit that our fellow men are by nature *as corrupt as the Devil!* We do know better! and we are ashamed that any of our species should ever have evinced so total an ignorance of human nature, as to advocate so palpable an error. As, however, light shall increase, we may expect the declension of this monstrous doctrine.

REMARKS ON THE SYMPATHIES OF HUMAN NATURE.

Man is a highly sympathetic being. How frequently have we seen whole congregations in tears, when a speaker addressed them on some pathetic subject! The passion of Jesus in the garden and his sufferings upon the cross have drawn millions of tear-drops from millions of unregenerate eyes. Men, and especially women, are much disposed to sympathise with objects of distress. In the house of mourning we have heard the spontaneous sob of bitter grief arise from nearly the whole assembled multitude, when beholding the convulsed sorrow of a bereaved husband or wife, father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter. O! how copiously did the tears flow, when the shroud was removed, and the friends and relatives were permitted to look for the last time upon the pale cold face of the deceased, and to bid a long adieu to the remains of a much loved, a long cherished friend. At that dark moment, what vibrations did they feel running along all the cords of their sensibility! what a gush of sorrow from their bosoms! what a susceptibility of tender emotions! If they had had enmity against the deceased, it seemed all then gone, and kindness in the place of it had filled their hearts. How often has the hand of the unregenerate, been extended, while a tear of real pity stood in his eye, to the wretched sons and daughters of poverty!

We know that the world has been inundated by depravity, and we are far from being disposed to cry peace, peace, where there is no peace. We are neither disposed, by any view which we may take of human nature, to exaggerate, nor to diminish, in relation to its goods or evils. We wish to behold it as it is, and to represent it as it presents itself to us, not in the airy regions of romance, but in real life; and, viewing it in this way, we must say, that we have been often delighted with the elevated principles which it is continually exhibiting in the unregenerate, as well as the regenerate. We have seen these principles developed in families and neighborhoods, in the infant and in the aged man; and we believe that until they are more highly appreciated than they can be by the advocates of total hereditary depravity, human nature will suffer a proportionate loss.

The exquisitely refined susceptibilities and sympathies of human nature are obvious in all our religious impressions and emotions. Through our sympathies, the cross affects us with omnipotent power. We sympathise with a suffering Savior: his love inflames our sensibilities: his bleeding wounds pour tenderness and contrition into our souls. Frequently we catch the sympathetic glow from some penitent sinner, who may be near us in the congregation. The cross of Jesus, it may be, subdues an impenitent mother: she advances to confess the Lord; the impenitent son, or daughter, beholds her tearful eye and heaving bosom, and lo! a sympathetic dart reaches the soul of one or both of them, and they too bow, willing, broken hearted penitents, under the august truths of the gospel. We have seen whole congregations thus melted into contrition: and we have no doubt but that thousands of souls in glory will bless the Lord eternally for that religion, by which their sympathies were aroused, and by which they were enlisted in the cause of life and salvation.

So easily may man be operated upon through his sympathies, that in various situations, he is by them exposed to serious evils. In noisy religious meetings, we have seen scores of persons convulsed by the roar of fanatical preachers and a few of their fanatical followers. The people would perhaps seem cold and lifeless through a principal part of the meeting: the preachers would become impatient, and even murmur in consequence of the lukewarmness of their auditors; presently a man famous for stirring the sympathies of human nature, with ghastly countenance and agonistic gesture, would harangue them: "Brethren," he would say, "give us a shout in the camp!" Immediately some of the more susceptible, perhaps the more weak minded of the sisterhood, would raise their treble voices in obedience to the preacher, in piercing, sometimes in heart-rending screams; the preachers themselves would descend among the people, and by stentor-like vociferations, stunning stamps on the floor, and loud clapping of their hands, produce an order of things, which is perfectly inconceivable to those who have not witnessed such fanatical exhibitions. You might now see females falling in namelessly indecent attitudes; others, males and females, taken with what is called the laughing exercise; some with the dancing exercise; others with the jerks; some singing; others praying; others exhorting!! Every scream was fuel to the flame of enthusiasm!! Thus have we frequently seen human nature wrought upon; and, we use it, as an illustration of the power of the human sympathies and of our wonderful susceptibility through them. To the honor, however, of the inhabitants of the United States be it spoken, that scenes of fanaticism such as we have just faintly described, do not often present themselves, except in new settlements, where the people are not well informed!*

But it is not necessary that we should dwell long upon cases of extreme excitations of human sympathy, in order to the appreciation of this subject; we are warranted in saying that any person, who will for a short time bring the operations of his mind and his heart under his strict and candid observation, will be convinced of his wonderful susceptibility of being operated upon through the medium of his sympathies. In this respect we may be assimilated to a musical instrument. The refined and innumerable sensibilities of our nature are the musical strings, upon which, through our senses, objects earthly and heavenly, continually play, and upon which, as upon a violin, may music, earthly and heavenly, with equal facility, be made. With the same facility, with which we feel the refreshing zephyrs of spring, or the biting blasts of winter, do we also feel the good and evil influences, which are continually operating upon us, from the multiplied and multiform objects which surround us.

Lest some fanatic should think us a very bad man for writing this paragraph, we will insert the following, from a sermon of Mr. John Wesley. "Perhaps some," says Wesley, "may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions, (sweet Jesus, dear Jesus, &c.) or even gently checking them, should check the fervor of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent some kind of fervor which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, (he means glory, glory, glory, &c.) jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms and legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency;—but it will not check, much less prevent, true scriptural devotion." Sermon 121, Vol. 2. pp. 444. The father of Methodism, it appears, was as much opposed *to fanaticism* as we are!

Let the reader walk into the garden, or into the fields, on a beautiful morning in spring; all nature will seem emulous to please him. The flowers will put forth their richest perfumes and most beautiful tints; the lambkins will frisk and leap along the smooth surface of the green meadow; the grove, but recently clothed with its beautiful foliage, will become vocal with the music of a thousand feathered songsters; nature will appear to have obtained a resurrection from the death of winter; and the heavens and the earth will, from ten thousand sources, pour such exhilirating streams of spirit stirring influences into his soul, as will either make him happy or miserable;—happy if his conscience is "void of offence;" but, perhaps, miserable, if guilt hangs heavily upon his soul,—in either case, it will convince him what a very susceptible creature he is!

How refined, how intense are the sympathies of mothers! Ah! could we but hear the sympathetic whisperings of the maternal heart: could we but feel for one moment as mothers feel when they look upon the fair and innocent face of their lovely babes; could we but feel that extacy which the infantile smile creates in the warm heart of a mother, or the pangs of that tenfold sorrow which convulses her bosom when her babe sickens and dies; could we enter into all her little maternal sentiments and feelings, her hopes and fears, her joys and sorrows; it would be more convincing, it would be more instructive than a thousand volumes. We challenge the world here! Yes, we say here is a volume—the volume of a mother's heart—that refutes all the gloomy croakings of the sticklers for total hereditary depravity! Come ye, read it and be wise! Daughters of America, we beseech you to read this sympathetic volume, and then tell us whether that maternal heart, which winds itself by a thousand sympathetic fibres around yonder smiling cherub, is totally depraved! Ah! superstition, how hast thou darkened almost every prospect! How hast thou bewildered and rendered irrational myriads of our race! Thou lookest upon the smiling face of an unconscious babe, and beholdest nought but Satanic depravity! Thou lookest into the heart of the affectionate mother as she presses her babe to her bosom, and pronouncest each affectionate emotion to be but the workings of black corruption!!! Thou art the spider of the mind. Thou convertest the sweetest fruits and the fairest flowers into poisons! But thou art hastening to thy sepulchre; thy days are numbered!!!

The view which we have just taken of the sympathetic nature of man, presents human nature in a most interesting point of light. It has been by no means our intention to enter largely upon this subject. We desired to call the attention of the reader to the subject of human sympathies, that he might perceive how very easy it is through them to operate upon human nature, by the diversified objects, good and evil, which surround us; and in order to prepare his mind for a consideration of the *power of truth*, and its fitness to operate upon, and influence the rational nature of man.

Within the bosom of every man there is the principle of self love; nor does the Christian religion contemplate the annihilating of this principle. The divesting of any man of self-love would be as great an injury as could be inflicted upon him. We are no where taught by any inspired teacher, the necessity of our divesting ourselves of self-love; we are commanded to "love our neighbor as ourselves;" but, if we love ourselves *not at all*, were we to love our neighbor no better than ourselves we should love him *not at all!!* Therefore self-love is required to be kept in active exercise. But let it be observed, that self-love, as well as all our passions, must be subjected to the laws of truth. It requires to be chastened continually. If it be not wisely regulated and controlled, it will run beyond its proper sphere; in which case it will become what we call selfishness, and will therefore be sinful. An equilibrium must be kept up—a balance of love between ourself and our neighbor; in which case self-love will be found to be promotive of the general good, as well as that of each individual who exercises it.

Now it is through the influence of self-love that men are sympathetic beings and that they are creatures of motive. It is only in the proportion in which we love ourselves, that we can desire good for the benefit of ourselves; and as without self-love we should have no love wherewith to love others; and as, also, without love for others, we could not sympathize with them, it follows with logical precision, that self-love presents the foundation of our motives and sympathies. Why does a man pray or seek salvation, but because he loves himself?—Why does he fear the condemnation and the punishment which await the guilty, but for self love? If a man loved not himself, would he be at all solicitous concerning his own salvation; or, indeed, in any respect, in relation to his own welfare, present or eternal? We think not. Well, if he were neither solicitous for his *own* present nor eternal welfare. is it probable that he would be solicitous for either the present or eternal welfare, of others? We think not. If then he were not solicitous for the welfare of others, he would certainly not sympathize with them; he would be in a state of total apathy, in relation both to his own and their welfare.

In the nature of self-love, we find a reason for the love of kindred. We say that self is very near, and that a child is very near to ones self! It is then because of the influence of self-love, that a woman loves her own child better than the child of her neighbor. She, therefore also sympathizes most with her own child. But she also sympathizes with the child of her neighbor, in the proportion in which she loves it. According to this law do love and sympathy go hand in hand, through all the ramifications of kindred and through all the labyrinths of society; nor can they be separated. For, if self-love exist, sympathy, by an immutable law, must exist also.

Now, in as much as men love themselves by an immutable law of their own nature, it follows necessarily, *that they must* desire such things as will, in their *estimation, conduce* to their happiness. It is upon the principle of self-love, that no man loves to be miserable, or deprecates happiness, and that happiness is the ultimate object of all human pursuits.

For the obtaining of this, the mariner ploughs the ocean, the soldier breasts the battle, the merchant navigates distant seas, the scholar consumes the midnight oil, the farmer perspires and toils under the rays of a vertical sun, and passes shivering through the blasts of winter, and for this, the Hindoo immolates himself to Juggernaut, or drowns himself in the waters of the Ganges!—All, all are in the pursuit of happiness! "Who will show us any good," is the universal inquiry! Thus do we become creatures of motive. All those objects which are within our reach, which appear to possess a fitness for conducing to our ultimate object, happiness, are grasped with avidity, are pursued with eagerness. And if, instead of obtaining happiness, we involve ourselves in misery by our pursuits, it is not that we do not most ardently desire happiness, but that we seek it, through ignorance or habit, in improper objects.

If this reasoning is correct, (and we think that we have a witness of its truth in every man's breast,) it will follow legitimately, that every man, in order to obtain the largest quantum of happiness of which he is capable in this world and in the world to come, must seek it by the pursuit of objects, such as are the best calculated to lead to this ultimate end. A knowledge of those objects, as well as the proper method of pursuit, are contained in God's holy word. The word of God, then, is intended to inspire us with motives of correct action, by pointing out to us the direct road to happiness—to an exceeding weight of glory! Hence it comes to us fraught with the most sublime and cogent arguments. It addresses our hopes and our fears. It pours in upon us a flood of light respecting present misery and everlasting destruction if we walk not in the truth; and it gives us present peace and eternal life for patient continuance in well doing.

No motives can equal those with which christianity inspires the few, who do with their hearts believe it; and it comes armed with testimonies too, to excite faith in our minds. Are not the motives of christianity as strong as are those of any other religion? If so, then look at the Hindoos! Read the history of that superstitious people! The motives of their religion stimulate widows to burn themselves on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands; their young men suffer themselves to be buried alive, and old and young prostrate themselves before the Car of Juggernaut, and are crushed beneath its ponderous wheels! Are we willing to admit that the religion of the Hindoos inspires its votarists with motives so strong as to propel them to these horrid deeds and in other respects to almost incredible acts of self-denial; and yet that the christian religion is so imbecile in point of motives that it cannot urge its votarists to walk in the ways of wisdom, which are ways of pleasantness, and all of whose paths are peace? Certainly no christian can admit this!!

In conclusion, permit us to remark that, there is no truth more obvious, than that man is a creature of motive. Let any candid man examine each reason that moves him to each action which he may perform within one week, and we think he will clearly perceive the force and importance of motives; and we also think, that, if his actions be good, he will find that truth inspired him with his motives; but if bad, his motives will be attributable to the power of falsehood!

ON THE POWER OF TRUTH, AND ITS FITNESS TO OPERATE ON HUMAN NATURE.

Although all truth is, to some extent, valuable, yet all truths are not equally valuable. The truth, by which we are informed of the death of a fly, is not so valuable as that by which we are informed of the death of a father or mother; nor is this so valuable as that by *which we* are informed of the death of our Lord Jesus

Christ. Truths are valuable, only in the proportion in which they possess, in their own essence, a fitness to be in any possible way of utility. The fitness of a truth for the production of good to any sentient being, is invariably the standard of its value.

Truths, may however, possess within themselves, a fitness to be of utility to rational sentient beings, and yet may be of no utility to them whatever, because they do not appreciate them! We will not venture to assert that we cannot be benefitted by any truth until we appreciate it; but we will say, that the greater part of the most valuable truths with which men have ever been acquainted, are beneficial to them, only in the proportion in which they are known and appreciated. Of what utility would be those truths which comprise the system of navigation, or astronomy, or chemistry, or botany, or indeed any art or science, were they neither known nor appreciated? They would be of no more use to man than a diamond in the bottom of the ocean; which diamond, also, let it be noticed, in order to be appreciated, must first be known to be a diamond—just so in respect to truth.

If, then, truths the most important, in order to be beneficial, must be known, we conclude, that the truths of the christian religion, in order to be beneficial, must be known also. Indeed, the moral power, the vital energies of these truths, cannot be felt in the soul of man, until he has known them. "Ye shall *know* the *truth*," said Jesus; "and the *truth* shall make you free." It is through a knowledge of the truth, that "the word of God becomes *quick* and *powerful*," and makes the sinner who receives the "*love of truth*," free, indeed, from all his sins.

One of the ancients said, "*Great* is the truth, and *mighty* above all things, and shall prevail." And it is upon this principle, that our Saviour called himself "the truth." "I am," said he, "the way, *the truth*, and the life." *The word* of God, is that divine system of truths, by which sinners are freed from sin; and this word is not only said to make "free from sin," but to regenerate, sanctify and save! James says, "of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." Peter says, "being born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed: the word." James speaks of "the engrafted or implanted word, which is able to save our souls." Paul recommended his brethren "to God and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among the sanctified." And Jesus said, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The gospel is also called "the *power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

The power of truth consists chiefly in two things:—First. *Its fitness to purify the mind of a human being, when received.* Second. *Its evidence.* At present, we shall speak of *the power contained in the evidences of the truths of the Christian religion.*

If any person will read the acts of the Apostles intelligently, we think that he will be convinced, that the truths of the gospel were carried with convicting and converting power, to the hearts of those sinners to whom the Apostles preached, by the force of testimony; and that this testimony was either prophetic or miraculous—or both.

Take, if you please, the conversions which were effected on the day of Pentecost. What an uproar did the sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, produce, throughout the whole city of Jerusalem! The multitude came running together, and lo! when they arrived at the place where the Apostles had located, they beheld cloven tongues like as of fire; and they heard illiterate fishermen speak in a multitude of languages, the wonderful works of God. They were astonished, amazed, and confounded! But Peter, the illustrious Peter, arose, and preached to them Jesus; proving by the miraculous circumstances which were visible to the *eyes* and audible to the *ears* of the multitude, as well as by David and Joel, and the miracles which Jesus had wrought in the land of Judea, and in the city of Jerusalem, and also by his own personal testimony, and that *of the other* Apostles, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah: that he had been crucified by their own wicked hands; but that by the power of the highest, he had been raised from the dead, and sat on the throne of the Universe!! The people were pierced in their hearts!! The sword of the Spirit, the word of God, had entered their vitals, by the force of all the testimonies which had on that eventful day been presented to them. (See *Acts*, *ch.* 2.) Peter does not seem to have had any idea, that he could operate upon them morally or spiritually, through any other media than their *eyes* and their *ears*. "HE," says Peter, "hath shed forth this which you now SEE and HEAR;" from which we conclude, that by the things which they *saw* and *heard*, he expected to convert them; and that God threw all these wonderful circumstances around them, for the effecting of this very purpose!

Let us pass on, to the next account of conversions. Peter and John go up into the temple, and cure a lame man, who had been lame from his birth. The lame man commenced leaping and praising God, and all the people beheld him. But Peter declared to them that Jesus had made him whole, and immediately proceeded to deliver to them a powerful discourse, in which he proved that Jesus was the Christ, and exhorted them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. We are told that "many of them who heard this discourse believed; and that the number of the men was about five thousand," and also that "all men glorified God *for that which was done;* for the man was about forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed." Nay, such power did this miraculous evidence carry with it, that it stopped the *mouths even of the priests!* "What" said they, "shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot *deny it*." (See *Acts*, *chap*. 3, 4.) Is not the reader convinced by these testimonies, that Peter's discourse was carried with power to the hearts of those who believed, by the evidence of the miracle which he had wrought in curing the lame man? Nothing seems to us to be more evident. Had Peter merely delivered his discourse, and wrought no miracle, nor exhibited any other evidence of its truth, it would have had but little convincing power. It would probably have been a subject merely for the ridicule of both the priests and the people.

The conversion of Saul very clearly substantiates the truth of the question which we are arguing. Being exceedingly mad against the saints, he was going from Jerusalem to Damascus, for the purpose of apprehending and punishing all the christians whom he should find.—But suddenly a light from the Heavens above the brightness of the sun shone around him; nor was this all: a penetrating voice cried out, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus, the Nazarene whom thou persecutest?" It was enough!! The rebel was slain!!—Yes, almighty testimony had laid the stubborn persecutor prostrate on his mother earth!! Was it not testimony? Was not the marvellous light which shone around him, a divine evidence that the person who spoke to him, was indeed Jesus the Nazarene? Had not the voice been accompanied by some miraculous circumstance, is it not probable, that it would have been wholly disregarded by Saul? It is evident, then, that the miraculous circumstances which surrounded Saul at the time of his conviction, were the divine evidences by which the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, and not an impostor, was carried home with power to his soul.* But, if Saul had had neither *eyes* nor *ears*, the means by which he was convicted would have been inadequate; for "the light shone [let this circumstance be closely observed] *round about him*,"—not *within him*, as some will have it! It is also worthy of notice, that God, three days after the conviction of Saul, not by a small still voice!—a mere impulse! but by the mouth of Ananias, made known to this chosen vessel a very important action which he had to perform. "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Acts 22. Reader, if your heart aches in consequence of your many sins, and you believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we say to you, go and do likewise!

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*Saul did not receive the Holy Spirit until three days after his conviction! In proof see Acts 9: 17.

The conversion of Cornelius and his household, affords another evidence fully to our purpose. All the means by which these gentiles were converted, were, it seems, such as could be *seen* or *heard!** In answer to the prayers of Cornelius, an angel was sent to him, who told him to send for Peter. Peter comes, and preaches the gospel to him and to his household. The Holy Spirit descends upon them, as it had done upon the Jews at the beginning; they speak with tongues and magnify God, and joyfully submit to the institution of baptism in water. But why did not the Holy Spirit, without the aid of an angel, make known the truth to Cornelius? Or, if an angel must visit him, why could not the angel admit Cornelius into the Christian kingdom, without the aid of Peter? Ah! the angel had not the *keys!!* The angel was not a *baptizer!!* Peter had opened the door of the kingdom to the Jews, and must now open it to the gentiles. "Unto you, Peter," said Jesus, "will I give the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven!"

The divine circumstances by which Cornelius and his family were converted, carried with them such irresistible evidence, that not only was Peter convinced, by them, of the propriety of his preaching to the gentiles, but also the six prejudiced Jews who went with him to the house of Cornelius, and the murmuring brethren at Jerusalem. For when "Peter rehearsed the matter over, and expounded it by order unto them, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God granted unto the gentiles repentance unto life." *Acts. Chap.* 9, 10, 11.

Let us next consider the conversion of the jailor. The great earthquake was to the jailor an evidence of the truth of the gospel, and filled him with fear and trembling! We do not suppose that the earthquake would have converted him, without the word of the Lord; it was *that* which gave the word its energy. The foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, and the bands of the prisoners loosed; the jailor supposing the prisoners to have escaped, sprang into the jail, and tremblingly fell at the feet of Paul and Silas, crying, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" "Paul and Silas spake unto him the word of the Lord; and *to all* that were in his house;" (no infants there,) "and he and his family were baptized on the same hour of the night." See *Acts*, *Chap.* 16. In this case, as in every other, the word of the Lord was the *converting instrument;* but testimony the energy, the power, the nerve of the divine arm, by which it reached the heart.

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* The angel told Cornelius, that Peter "should tell him WORDS whereby he and all his house should be saved." Acts, 11: 14.

At Lystra, Paul cured a cripple; and the cripple leaped up and walked! The people *saw it*, and oh! how wonderful was the effect which this miracle had upon them! They lifted up their voices and, in the speech of Lycaonia, exclaimed, "The Gods have come down to us, in the likeness of men!" Paul, they called Mercurius, and Barnabas, Jupiter, and were just about to sacrifice to them, when Paul expostulated and spoke to them the word of the Lord. The miracle, an evidence which operated upon them through their *eyes*, stirred up their souls to the exhibition of all this zeal; but mark this: neither the miracle, nor any operation which they had yet experienced, could give the proper direction to their zeal. It removed not their idolatrous ignorance; but when the word of the Lord was presented to them, the evidence of this miracle became moral power, by which the word was made to work effectually. *Acts*, *Chap.* 14.

The conversion of Sergius Paulus, is another case in point. This man desired, we are told, to hear the word of the Lord: but Elymas withstood Barnabas and Saul, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. This circumstance fired the apostle with a holy indignation; and by the miraculous power with which he had been invested, he struck the perverse sorcerer with immediate blindness. This was indeed a notable miracle! and it had the desired effect upon the mind of the deputy! For "when he saw what was done, he believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." *Acts, Chap.* 13.

The curing Eneas of the palsy, eventuated in the conversion of the people of two whole districts!! "Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed: and he arose immediately. And ALL that dwelt in Lydda and Saron SAW him, and turned to the Lord." *Acts, Chap.* 9.

The raising of the benevolent Dorcas from a state of death, is another most interesting circumstance. There she lay all cold, and pale, and insensible; all the widows weeping around her, and showing the coats and garments which she had made. But Peter said, "Tabitha arise! and she opened her eyes and sat up. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord." *Acts, Chap.* 9.

But not only was the evidence of miracles the omnipotent energy, by which tens of thousands were converted in primitive times; the evidence of prophecy often produced the same effect. Behold the Ethiopian eunuch. He is sitting in his chariot, reading the prophecies of Isaiah. But he knows not whether the prophet speaks of himself, or of some other man. Philip explains—preaches to him Jesus. The prophecy fulfilled in Jesus, proves the truth of the glorious gospel. Through the medium of truth, he contemplates him, who was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and who like a lamb dumb before his shearer, opened not his mouth. He feels his heart melt within him, confesses his faith in Jesus, and is baptized. Just as the miracles of which we have spoken, by being presented to the *eyes* of those who saw them wrought, conveyed with converting energy the truth to the hearts of thousands; so, this prophetic evidence conveyed the truth of the gospel, with power, to the heart of the Ethiopian. The former evidence entered the mind through the *eyes*, the latter through the *ears*: but truth is not changed by the medium through which it passes; it retains under all circumstances its intrinsic efficacy, and needs but an admission to the soul, untrammelled by error, to insure it a legitimate operation.

Look at Paul: the corporeally dwarfish, but the morally gigantic Paul! The little man spread himself over Asia, and even into Europe, by the mighty power with which the truth had invested him. Look at him in the Areopagus in Athens! Dionysius and Demaris are rescued from the yoke of Satan. Hear him in Thessalonica reasoning out of the scriptures, Sabbath after Sabbath, alleging that Jesus is the Christ. See the crowds of believers, which in almost every place hang with breathless attention on his words. The craftsmen at Ephesus tremble before the majesty of truth; priests and bigots hurl against him their best weapons, persecution and defamation; but still he pushes on the conquest!! "Yes," said he, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but MIGHTY through God to the pulling down of strong holds! I am not ashamed of the gospel, for *it is the power* of God unto all who believe it."

Apollos, too, was *mighty* in the Scriptures; and "*mightily* convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." Acts 18. 28. But the might of Apollos consisted not in the strength of his arm! He was mighty only through the truth! We sometimes say of a man of much learning and eloquence, who argues well, and presents truth with great convincing energy, "he is a *strong* man: he is a *mighty* man!" And of his arguments, we say, "they are strong, weighty, powerful, irresistible." We also say of the ignorant, "they are weak men." And of their arguments, and indeed of all arguments not accompanied with competent testimony, they are weak, chaffy, light, flimsy, &c. All these epithets go to show, that, in the common apprehension of mankind, truth is powerful. Common sense will frequently rebel, in despite of bigotry, against the creeds; and in those cases, even those who call truth, when committed to writing, "a dead letter," use the above epithets as indicative of their common sense conclusions in relation to its power.

The truth, then, was what made Paul and Apollos and Peter and John and all the noble leaders of the primitive Church, "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." By its clear and irresistible evidences, they fought all their battles and gained many a glorious victory. Or if we may be permitted to change the figure, the gospel was the wedge—the testimonies were the instrument by which the wedge was driven—and the speaker who was mighty in the Scriptures, was he who wielded this instrument.

So weighty and so powerful did our Lord consider those evidences to be, which he had presented to the Jewish nation, that he said, "woe unto thee Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works [miracles] which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have REPENTED LONG AGO in sackcloth and ashes." "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Matt. ch. 11. In a former part of this work, we proved, that the inhabitants of Sodom were more righteous than the Jews; and here we see, that the Jews resisted evidences which contained moral energy enough to have constrained the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom to repentance—to genuine repentance, we may say, or else their repenting would not have caused the Lord to spare them.

On one occasion, after Jesus had presented evidence to the Jews, by which to prove that he was the Messiah, and ascertained that they believed not, it is said, that "*He marvelled at* THEIR *unbelief.*" But why did he marvel, if there is no fitness in evidence for the production of faith? Suppose that one of the disciples had said, "Lord, you seem astonished that these people do not believe; is there any virtue in those external miracles which you have wrought, and in the words which you have spoken, to originate in their hearts *saving* and *evangelical* faith?" Now, suppose our Lord to have answered "No;" and to have said also, "I know very well, that before these people can believe, I must operate upon their hearts abstractly, by my spirit;" what do you think the disciples would have thought of him? Would they not have said, "Have you operated upon them in this way, by which alone they can be made to believe?" "No."! "And do you really marvel?" "No."!!! He must again have said "No!!!" For as well might he have marvelled, that the darting of straws at them failed to constrain them to believe, as evidence—if evidence has no fitness for the production of faith!!! In what would such conduct have differed from hypocrisy?

All the preceding instances of conversion do, to our mind, prove, in the most conclusive manner, that the converting power is contained in the divine testimonies. Are we not right in this? Even human testimony very frequently carries with it irresistible power; and John says, "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." If we can believe from the force of human testimony, which is the less—why not from the force of divine testimony, which is the greater? How often, by human testimony, has a jury of twelve men been constrained, very unwillingly, to believe facts against their fellow men?—yes, with so unwavering a a belief, too, as to find them guilty of murder! Reader, blush!! if you feel within yourself a disposition to say that men may be believed with full assurance, from the naked force of human testimony—but that the testimony of God has not native virtue enough to elicit our faith!

We cannot, at present, pursue this branch of our subject further. We think that when, in connexion with the preceding examples of conversion, the sympathetical and susceptible nature of man shall have been considered, it will be admitted, that men are not by nature totally depraved, and that there is a fitness in the divine word, to produce faith. It is written, "Faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the *word*."

LANGUAGE AN ADMIRABLE MEDIUM FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF TRUTH.

The advocates for the doctrine of total hereditary depravity seem not very well to understand this subject. "The Bible," they say, is mere *paper and lamp-black*—how can IT possess power by which to constrain people to believe savingly?" They also tell us, that "the Bible is a *dead letter** to the unregenerate." We wish, therefore, by some remarks on the subject of language, to remove these objections; and also, still further to illustrate the power of truth.

Language may be considered as either oral or written; in either case, it is composed of words, and words are the stipulated signs of ideas. Oral words are articulated or jointed sounds, formed by the organs of speech; and written words are characters formed and combined in pursuance to common consent. Oral language is addressed to the ear—written language to the eye; oral language proceeds from the mouth of a speaker—written language is exhibited in stipulated characters described on paper, or on the surface of any other substance.

All language may be said to possess a *body* and a *soul!* The body of oral language is its *articulated sounds;* the body of written language, its *characters*—but the *soul* of both oral and written language is its *signification!* Words, then, without signification, (if there are any such words,) are dead! Consequently, if the *words* and *sentences* of the Bible are destitute of signification, it is indeed "a dead letter." But who will venture to say this? Is not the Bible *big* with meaning? Is it not a vehicle through which is communicated an overwhelming assemblage of the most sublime and stupendous facts? Facts, which have astonished the heavens and the earth!! Then, most incontrovertibly, it is not "a dead letter!"

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*"*The letter killeth;*" can that which is dead, kill?

Language has, by one eminent philologist, been denominated "*a thought throwing machine!*" By means of oral language, a speaker throws, with the velocity of lightning, thoughts from his own mind into those of his hearers; and by means of written language, the writer conveys his thoughts from state to state, from continent to continent, over mountains, rivers, lakes, oceans! Yes, by this grand machine, we can throw our thoughts from the State of Ohio to the city of London—to the ends of the earth! By prayer we can convey our thoughts from our own minds to the ear of God. It is truly a wonderful and most gracious machine. It is, next to Jesus, heaven's best gift to man. Nay, without it, we should have known nothing of Jesus—nor of the love of God—nor of immortality. But God, after having bestowed language upon man, used it as an instrument of his own mercy, and by its means, threw from beyond all heavens, to our earth, to the ears of prophets and apostles, his thoughts concerning salvation. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, the heart of man hath not conceived the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us [apostles and prophets,] by his Spirit;" "which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, explaining spiritual things in spiritual words." The Lord threw his thoughts into the minds of the apostles, in order that they might transmit them through the same spiritual words which he had used, into the minds of all who would hear. Hence it was said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel *to every creature.*"

But must we indeed believe, that the bible is dead because it is merely paper and lamp-black? That bond, sir, which you hold, for one hundred dollars, is nothing but paper and lamp-black! Is IT dead? Is it not rather quick and powerful? That instrument in which your father willed you a large estate, is mere paper and lamp-black! But does it not transmit to your very soul a strange influence? That letter which those aged parents have just received from a distant country, is paper and ink! but behold! why do those tears trickle down their cheeks? Why that wringing of the hands? Why those convulsive sobs? The letter tells them, (and each word is like a swift-winged arrow,) the letter tells them that their beloved son is dead! The power of language is in the signification; the meaning of language is its life; the signification is the dart that pierces, the fire that warms, or the oil that heals! Language without signification is like a human body without a spirit—dead!

Language, however, cannot affect human beings legitimately, unless they understand it. Hence, the necessity of every man's having a Bible in his own language. Hence also we blame the Catholic Priests, for preaching to the people in a language which they do not understand. But, if Bible truth, in the English language, is dead to those persons who speak this language, why is not the practice of the Romish Priests as good as ours? Why is not Latin as edifying to unregenerate men who understand not a word of it, as English? You say, "because, as the people understand not the Latin words, they convey no signification to their minds." But will *dead letter*, in English, convey any profitable signification to unregenerate ears? If you say, "No:" we reply that Latin is just as good as English, to be used by preachers in their addresses to the unregenerate. If you answer in the affirmative, you acknowledge the power of truth to benefit the unregenerate; even though transmitted through the printed words and sentences of the scriptures. And we beseech you not to forget this one thing: if you will not admit a powerfully influential transmission of truth through the machinery of the Bible, you will attribute more power to human, than to divine language.

Paul was of the opinion, that intelligible language might have great influence in the mind of an unbeliever. *See* 1 *Cor*. 14 *Chap*. Prophecy, in this chapter, signifies the speaking in a known tongue. Now, says Paul, "If ye all prophecy, and their come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is *convinced* of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and, so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." But mark the difference! These same truths, spoken to this same individual in an unknown tongue, would cause him to say "Ye are mad!" Can the reader account for this difference in any other way, than by admitting that the converting power is in the truth; and that the truth cannot be communicated, excepting through an intelligible medium? This fact is, we think, now very apparent. Indeed the Apostle says, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me."

We have sometimes, for the sake of illustration, assimilated the word of God to a telescope. This instrument possesses the faculty of bringing far distant objects to be in appearance near to the observer. Dr. Herschell's large telescope, it is said, places the moon apparently at the distance of only forty miles from the observer! By this wonderful instrument, the material heavens have been penetrated, and myriads of brilliant worlds discovered. But the telescopic word is infinitely more wonderful! Through IT, we view the creation of the heavens and the earth at the beginning, and their dissolution at the end of time. All the ancient worthies come within the sphere of our vision, and pass in interesting review before us: we can almost behold the face of the Patriarchs and Prophets, so vivid are the descriptions of Holy Writ. We see also the rise and fall of nations: the judgments of God in all their terrible majesty: fire from above destroying the cities of the plain, and the earth opening her mouth to devour Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. We behold Jesus, first in a manger; then upon a cross; now upon the throne of the universe; finally descending arrayed in all the grandeur of eternity, in all the solemnity of judgment. Not the material but the immaterial, the spiritual heavens have been laid open for our inspection! We look within the veil! Hell, *too, with* all its horrors, is visible! In one sentence, the blessed word of God is a divine medium, through which we may contemplate all those objects about which it is conversant, whether past or future, great or small, good or bad, in heaven or in hell, in time or in eternity; and we may bring them near; yes, and feel all their weight and influence.

This telescopic illustration will enable us to show in what manner a diversity of operations may be effected in the human mind, through the medium of the word. When we take a telescope, in order to make an observation, should we behold a fiery comet speeding its way with direct precipitancy towards our earth, what horror would thrill along our nerves!! But suppose that, instead of a comet, fair Venus should become the object of our contemplations, how different our emotions!! We would not imagine, that in these cases, the power of operation was exclusively in the telescope; we should attribute our emotions, in some measure, to those objects contemplated through it. In the same way then, are we operated upon by a diversity of objects, through the word. A contemplation of the "evil one," and of the "dark abyss," gives us horror: the love of Jesus spreads peace, and mild serenity over the mind. We have some times assimilated the word to a sun-glass: because, as the glass brings the rays of the sun to a focus, to a burning point, so the word of the Lord concentrates the moral light of the heavens and the earth upon the heart of man!

Why are the leaders of the sects so much alarmed, in consequence of the circulation of the writings of certain individuals, who advocate religious reformation, if they are not believers in the mighty power of words? Why, but for this belief, have the writings of A. Campbell, by several ecclesiastical councils, been proscribed? And, we may also ask, what, but the power of words, has built up and perpetuated all the sects in Christendom? Does the Spirit, without human language, make Christians? Upon what principle then, does Presbyterian preaching make Presbyterians; Methodist preaching, Methodists; and Baptist preaching, Baptists? If no other than the Holy Spirit were engaged in this work, would he not make them all to be of one denomination? Ah! the power of language is conspicuous here! Have you never noticed that the more eloquent and the more popular the preacher, the more numerous are his converts? We speak not this by way of disparagement to any person; it ought to fire the minds of preachers with unconquerable desire for the acquisition of knowledge and eloquence, that by a proper and most forcible presentation of truth, they might save many souls from death and cover a multitude of sins.

It may be, that the reader by this time is disposed to ask, "why the word of the Lord, (if it possesses so much moral or spiritual energy, as we have attributed to it,) does not more largely influence those to whom it is administered." We shall be happy to answer this question. The reader may have an answer in these words: *falsehood neutralizes the truth!!!* Let the reader suppose himself to receive a letter from an acquaintance in a distant state, informing him that a rich uncle had died, leaving him the sum of ten thousand dollars. Let him also imagine himself to be poor, and in great need of money; and that the letter is accompanied with circumstances, such as leave no doubt of its truth. Would not the reader with alacrity hasten to the residence of his uncle? Yes; faith in the contents of the letter and hope of obtaining the money, would be securities against all delay. Let the reader, however, imagine that he takes up the letter again, and notices a postscript which he had not before read. It reads as follows: "I have willed to my nephew, the aforesaid sum of ten thousand dollars, on the condition that he place himself in a basket, and taking hold with his hands, each side of it, that he lift himself up, and in this way actually convey himself, to my residence." Let the reader imagine this postscript to be genuine, would not the letter be neutralized? Suppose the whole letter to be true, still it would be neutralized! "Why," says the reader, "I am unable to fulfil the condition, and consequently the letter is of no use to me." Thus do the Calvinists and Fullerites neutralize the gospel! They present to sinners the blessing of pardon and the glories of Heaven; and lo! after all, tell them they can do nothing!! The sinner believes them, and remains where he was—in sin!

If the reader please, he may vary this illustration. He may suppose the postscript to propose, as a condition, that "he shall remain perfectly stationary,* until a messenger from his uncle arrive, place him in the basket, and convey him by physical strength to the house of his uncle. Would this expedite—would not this infallibly prevent his journey? So is the truth neutralized! The sinner is represented as totally depraved, and incapable of every effort by which his situation might be bettered, until the Holy Spirit come, take the soul by storm, and lead it captive by *sovereign*, (we would say *partial*) grace!

Again: let the reader suppose a traveller to be in a strange country, and desiring to make the best of his way to the chief city. He sees a multiplicity of roads, extending in all directions, through every part of the country. Travellers too, in crowds, are hastening along these roads; and for the sake, perhaps, of being odd, some are seen gliding onward, at a distance from all roads! Now, let these travellers represent the great diversity of religionists, and these roads the great diversity of religions; our traveller will of course represent an enquirer for the true religion,—the road that leads to heaven. Well, he makes the inquiry; his ears are immediately stunned with discordant sounds! "The light within," says one; "Anna Lee," says another; "general atonement, and special application," vociferates a third; "sovereign grace, and particular election," cries a fourth: "you cannot move an inch until God regenerates you by his spirit," cry a half-dozen at once!! Now what is the traveller to do? He stands as still as a Grecian or Roman statue! He is neutralized! Yes, ye speculatists, ye have neutralized him! Ye have made void the word of God by your traditions! and the Lord will require it at your hands!

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* It would make the matter no better, to say that this person should strive and agonize, until the messenger should come!! What! a mass of total corruption strive!—seek!!—absurd!!

Imagine a perpendicular mill-wheel. The water pours on it from above, but it refuses to turn. A philosopher standing by, begins to speculate on the strange phenomenon: and to what wonderful conclusion do you suppose he arrives? Just hear it! "The water," he concludes, "is not the right kind of water, or certainly the wheel would turn!" A matter of fact man, however, who has no great taste for this very refined speculation of our philosopher, looks under the wheel, and finds a prop there, by which it had been neutralized; he removes the prop, and lo! the wheel turns! So it is with the minds of thousands of sinners throughout Christendom: truth pours upon their minds, but yet they are not moved to obedience. The truth is blamed by many, as our philosopher blamed the water: but the *prop* is to blame! the *traditions* of the elders are to blame! these neutralize the truth.

But truth, like light, is a penetrating thing. If there is any medium through which it can pass, it will enter the soul; nor will it easily depart. What is it but the power of truth in the soul, that makes the sinner so uneasy in his conscience? He uses various expedients by which to destroy its operations, but still his heart aches and trembles. The intoxicating draught sometimes affords a momentary palliative; but when sobriety returns, its throbbings and thrillings are redoubled. The infidel, it is true, sometimes boasts of his unbelief, but not unfrequently he has more faith than he desires! Go to his death-bed, and witness the power of truth. There his tongue tells the convulsions of his bosom. There he calls on the name of that Savior whom once he neglected, and shudders at the prospect of that hell which once he ridiculed. How often has truth held back the arm of the assassin, and restrained the murderer from the perpetration of his deed of blood. What, but truth, has made the difference which is known to exist, between civilized and heathen nations. Yes, great is, and has *been* the influence of truth: but much greater would it have been, had not it been so frequently, and so powerfully opposed by error.

THE POWER OF TRUTH CONTINUED.

In Exodus, there is a circumstance recorded, which interestingly and instructively illustrates the power of testimony. God's people, Israel, were in bondage in Egypt, and in order to the delivering of them from bondage, he gave faith to the whole nation! From this circumstance then, we expect to prove, that there is fitness in testimony to operate upon human nature; and, consequently, that there is a fitness in human nature to be operated upon by testimony.

The attention of Moses was first arrested by a burning bush! A voice from the bush, declared the speaker to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and informed Moses, that HE had been chosen, to be the deliverer of the afflicted Israelites. *Exodus, Chap.* 3. But "Moses answered and said, behold, they will not BELIEVE, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, *the Lord hath not sent thee.*" Exo. Chap. 4. "How shall the people be constrained to believe?" seems to have been the difficult question, which agitated the mind of Moses. The Lord will give them faith!! "What is that," said the Lord, "in thine hand?" "A rod." "Cast it on the ground." Moses did so, and it became a serpent. "Put forth thine hand," said the Lord, "and take it by the tail." Moses obeyed, and it again became a rod. This miracle was to be wrought by Moses in the presence of the children of Israel, in order to constrain them to believe that God had sent him to be their deliverer; and also to believe all the words which he should declare to them from the Lord; and in case this miracle should fail to have the desired effect, he was to present them with *two others*. See *Exo.* 4 *Chap.* To the same end, and for the enlightening of the gentiles, were the ten plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, and the waters of the sea divided. The nations were much addicted to idolatry; the Lord, therefore, chose, not only to give, on this occasion, such testimonies as would carry the words of Moses with convincing power to the hearts of the Israelites; but such also, as would "make his *power known*, and cause *his name* to be declared throughout *all the earth.*" By the miracles wrought in Egypt, all the gentile nations, who should hear of them, would know that the God of Israel was greater than all the Gods of the gentiles,—that he was the Lord of Hosts!

Thus were the children of Israel constrained to put themselves under the supervision of Moses, and to follow him out of the land of their bondage. The Lord gave them faith, by presenting adequate testimony to their *eyes* and *ears*—faith enough to cause them to leave the land of their nativity; to face the frightful Arabian desert; to pass along upon the bottom of the mighty deep, though its waters as lofty walls stood high above their heads on either side; and, we may add, that God gave them this faith by testimony, notwithstanding "they were a stiff-necked and a rebellious people."

Does not the reader perceive, in the circumstances connected with the emancipation of the children of Israel from bondage, the power of testimony? Testimony wrought faith; faith stimulated to obedience; and faith and obedience bore them, as on eagles' wings, from the land of their oppressors! Thus, dear reader, will faith and obedience lift our souls above the earth, and give them an introduction to the royalties of Heaven.

If the reader will read the five books of Moses, he will discover, that not only was he the deliverer of Israel, but gave to them, from God, a whole system of religion. A perfect knowledge of the religion of the Jews may be obtained from the writings of Moses; and also a knowledge of the means by which this religion was to be perpetuated among these people, throughout all succeeding generations. These means chiefly consisted, in the observance of annual festivals, various other ceremonial rites, and above all things, the reading of the writings of Moses, or the hearing of them read. In the valedictory address of this illustrious leader, he says to the whole nation, that "This commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it down to us, that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it; but the word is very near unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it." *Deut. Chap.* 30.

The Apostle Paul quotes very nearly these words of Moses, when speaking of the Christian religion. *See Rom. Chap.* 10. But to the point. We have seen that the Jews' religion was established by evidences, such as could be *seen* and *heard;* and that it was to be perpetuated by tangible and substantial means. Is not this also true of the Christian religion? Was the Jews' religion established by miracles? So was the Christian! Were the principles of the Jews' religion committed to writing, by a man sent of God? The Christian religion was written by *men* sent of God! Was the Jews' religion written as a means by which to perpetuate in that nation a knowledge of it? John says, concerning the things which he had written, "These things are written, that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that *believing* ye might have LIFE through his name." *John, Chap.* 20. Had the Jews their Sabbaths and their annual festivals? Christians have their first day of the week, and baptism, and the supper of the Lord!

Between the Jewish and the Christian religion, there runs throughout a beautiful analogy; but from this analogy, as well as all the features of the two religions, we think it as clear as demonstration itself, that testimony, or evidence presented to the *eyes* or to the *ears*, was the divine power or energy, by which faith was wrought in the minds of the people. The whole machinery of both Testaments works only on this principle. The miracles, the prophecies, the ordinances, all tend to this point.

Hence the strength of the arguments which the Christian can present against infidelity. A man, who, as was Apollos, is mighty in the scriptures, may panoply himself in the spiritual omnipotence of Heaven, for the conviction of unbelievers. But hark! here shows itself the serpent-head of another neutralizing falsehood!! "The faith, that is produced by these testimonies," say the advocates for total depravity, "is a *mere historical faith!!*" Would you denominate the testimonies of God, recorded in the Bible, "*a mere history?*"!! Is it not *a divine history?* If a divine history is a divine cause, must it not produce a *divine effect?* "These things," says John, "were written that ye might *believe,*"—"and *have life!*" Are not the writings of John a divine history, written for the purpose of giving a divine faith, that such believers might receive a divine life? O! ye neutralizers of God's truth, answer us these questions? And answer us also this: is not the disbelief of the divine history of Jesus Christ, given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, infidelity? You say "yes." Is not infidelity, the opposite of the true faith?" "Yes." Then the true faith must be the belief of divine history! Is not the true faith a belief of the truth? Again: there is much said in the Holy Scriptures concerning *hope* and *love,* as well as *faith.* But if faith is not to be understood in its usual acceptation, why should we understand *hope* and *love* in their usual acceptations? In this way, we might render mystical, and dark as midnight, almost every word in the Bible! The usual acceptation of faith, is, *the belief of testimony;* that of hope, *the desire and expectation of future good;* and that of love, *affection mingled with admiration.*

We believe that God used human language as a medium for the communication of those truths which he has required us to believe; and that, in the use of language, he has not attached meanings to our words, such as custom has not sanctioned. To have used the words of men in any other than the sense which the customs of men had sanctioned, would have been to perplex, *not to enlighten.* Paul, under the influence of the divine spirit, was careful to use words easily to be understood, and tells us, that he "used great plainness of speech." But if, when he said *faith, hope, love,* or any thing else, he did not use the words in their usual acceptation, in what did his plainness of speech consist? He sometimes speaks of *doubting!* but if by this word he did not mean what it usually signifies, who can tell what he did mean? Is not *doubting* the opposite of *believing?* The answer must be affirmative! Therefore, there is no more difficulty in understanding the meaning of the word *faith,* than the meaning of the word *doubt!*

The advocates for the doctrine of total hereditary depravity frequently inveigh with great bitterness against Deism! We would therefore ask them in what way they would proceed to convince a Deist of his errors? Would you "*reason with him out of the Scriptures?*" This was Paul's practice; but we cannot perceive why you should reason with an unbeliever at all! Suppose you should convince him! His faith, according to your own doctrine, would be *a mere historical,* and consequently not a *saving faith!* His convictions, according to your hypothesis, could be of no possible service to him. Why then do you blame an unbeliever for his unbelief? If the power of *saving faith* is not in testimony, and the unbeliever cannot believe, until God operates upon him abstractly by his spirit, ought you not to pity, rather than blame him?

The evils produced by those who inveigh against that divine faith, which is the production of the divine testimonies, frequently bring to our mind the following illustration. A poor woman, who had a large family of children, was reduced to very distressed circumstances.—Her children were starving around her, although she had money to supply plentifully all their wants! Her money was pronounced by the *broker* and *merchant,* to be counterfeit; and as she confided in their judgment, she was intimidated for some time, from attempting to use it. At length, however, a judicious friend, after examining it, advised her to present it to the bank whence it had been issued, telling her, that he believed it to be a genuine note. She did so—and received for it, its amount in silver and gold. Now let this bank note represent the historical faith of sinners. Those who possess it, are told by the *managers of spiritual concerns*, that it is a mere historical faith, and of no value. This falsehood neutralizes the power of truth in their minds, and renders their faith as useless to them, as was for a time the note of the woman. Let them, however, be encouraged to present this faith, by gospel obedience, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who issued it, and the bank of Heaven will give them pardon and the Holy Spirit, and all things necessary to life and godliness. Let them remember the parable of the talents. The servant who had but one talent buried his; acted as those who possess historical faith are doing! Let every man who has any faith at all, put it to use by obedience; and as he shall answer for it at the day of judgment, let no man attempt to prevent him from putting into practice his faith; for those who will not, by obedience, use what faith they have, will, in a future day, be called "*wicked and lazy servants.*"

OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Having been often accused of denying the operations of the Holy Spirit, by men too, who professed to be under its influence, we think it prudent to say a few words on this topic, in order to prevent misapprehension, and, we may add, misrepresentation. We believe, that the whole system of christianity is a spiritual system—that it is from God, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. All the ancient Prophets spake "as they were moved upon by the Spirit;" and the Apostles spake "as the Spirit gave them utterance." "Jesus, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils," and performed all his miraculous *works!* Therefore, the whole machinery of the divine *revelation is by* the Holy Spirit!

Now, we say, that whatever is done legitimately, by those things which the Holy Spirit has given and instituted, is done by the Holy Spirit itself! If a man uses offensive words against an individual, and those words insult him, the man who uses the offensive epithets, is properly said to be the author of the insult. Whatever thing any man may do, in any possible way, by any possible instrument, is attributable to the man, primarily; secondarily, to the instrument. This illustrates our view of spiritual operations. All the words recorded in the Bible, given by inspiration of God, and addressed to us, we consider to be the words of the Holy Spirit; and whatever "effectual workings" these words may produce in us, we believe to be spiritual operations.

Men operate upon one another by their words.—John Wesley, for instance, has operated upon millions in Europe and America, by his words—yes, even by his written words; just so the Spirit may operate by his written word; and as we would say, that a writer, by his writings, might do much good, so would we attribute all the benign influences of the christian religion, to the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Previously to the death of the apostle John, there were seven epistles sent to the seven churches of Asia, in each of which were the following remarkable words:—"*He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.*" The words, it seems, which had been written in these epistles, were the words of the Holy Spirit; and the Spirit did, through these seven letters, as really speak to the persons addressed, as ever did one friend, through the medium of a letter, speak to another. Now, this is true with respect to all the words and sentences in the Bible which are addressed to us. The Holy Spirit thus speaks sometimes in accents of thunder to our souls. He has come down from Heaven filled with all divine and spiritual arguments—clothed with all divine and heavenly motives—presenting in his letters of love to the world and to the church, all sublime and interesting objects, in order to captivate our souls. We have already shown, that these arguments and motives which the Spirit has presented, have been, in numerous instances, effectual and irresistible; and, we consequently feel thoroughly warranted in teaching, that the Spirit operates through his words.

The holy spirit operated through his words upon the Jewish nation in the wilderness. Nehemiah says, "Thou gavest them also thy good Spirit to instruct them," &c. Neh. 9: 20. The margin refers to Numbers, in which we have an account of the manner in which the Spirit did instruct them. If the reader will read the 11th chapter of Numbers, he will find, that this instructing Spirit was not within the people of Israel; it was first upon Moses, and afterwards in consequence of the murmuring of the people, and in order to lessen the arduous labours of Moses, was put upon seventy elders, who were constituted the teachers of the nation. Indeed Nehemiah teaches us, that this method of national instruction had been kept up until his day. He recapitulates the mercies of the Lord, of which Israel in different ages had partaken, and then says: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them and testifiedst against them *by thy spirit in thy prophets.*" The Spirit of the Lord was in the prophets; and from their mouths and pens did it send forth its instructions, in order that it might, by them, operate upon the minds of the people. It is also written, "my spirit shall not always strive with man, nevertheless the days of his life shall be one hundred and twenty years." In this case, the spirit of God was in Noah, testifying against the antediluvians, letting them know that if they did not repent they should at the expiration of one hundred and twenty years be drowned. Hence, it is said, that "Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went *and preached* to the spirits in prison." The spirit of Christ was in Noah, who was a righteous man, and a preacher of righteousness; and Christ was said to preach to the antediluvians, in this way, by his spirit, just as after his death, he was said to preach to the gentiles. In the latter case, the spirit of Christ was in the apostles; and he was said to "preach peace to them that were afar off." But, that the spirit of God does not bodily enter the hearts of wicked men, can be proved positively by the testimony of Jesus Christ. "And I will pray the Father," says Jesus, "and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you, (the christians) forever; even the spirit of truth; *whom the world cannot receive*, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." John 14. 17.

By the foregoing testimonies, it has been proved, that God's-spirit was in the prophets and apostles; and that God gave his testimonies to and against the people, by his spirit through their mouths; *and that the world cannot receive this spirit.* We must then from necessity conclude, that the spirit, in order to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, does not enter it; it convinces by the strong arguments, which it has put forth through the mouths of the prophets and apostles.

But, although the spirit will not enter the world, yet it does enter the hearts of believers. "He that believeth on me," says Jesus, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the spirit which they that *believe on him* should receive." John 7. 38, 39. "Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of *faith*?" "He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of *faith*?" Gal. 3. Jesus tells us, in his sermon on the mount, that "God will give his spirit to those that ask him." On the day of Pentecost, the believing Jews were commanded to "repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," and they were told that they "should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In the 8th of Acts, we have the history of the reception of the word in Samaria; they believed, and were baptized both men and women. In the 16th verse, however, we are told, that when, afterwards, Peter and John went down to Samaria, "the spirit had fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."—And in the 19th of Acts, we read of twelve disciples who believed, and "had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Spirit." In one sentence, we say *that the Holy* Scriptures give no proof that the Spirit of

God did ever enter the heart of an unbeliever!! A now, to bring to an end, all murmurings and misrep sentations in relation to this subject, we say that if a gentleman will send us any passages, found in the Bil which prove the opposite of the doctrine which we ha just proved, we will print, and circulate them grat and with them our recantation!

THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT CONTINUED.

In the preceding chapter, we spoke only of those erations of the Spirit which are called moral. The are by and through the word; and eventuate in bringi the Spirit itself into the heart of the believer. We a however, very far from denying the physical operatio of the Spirit. But these physical operations are not th by which the soul is converted. "The Spirit of t Lord," we are told, "moved upon the face of the water The Spirit quickened the dead body of Jesus; and t same Spirit will quicken the dead bodies of all the sain These are what we denominate physical operations the Spirit. And we are of the opinion, that in some fo or other, these operations are commensurate with u ersal creation.

By a physical operation of the Spirit of God, the ear and the heavens sprang into existence; the heavens we studded with myriads of brilliant orbs, and the earth f led with myriads of inhabitants. God and his Spirit a one: God spake and it was done; he commanded and stood fast; the earth, the waters, the air, the light—a obeyed him;—therefore, all nature, with all its inco ceiveably numerous forms, is a fruit of the Holy Spiri But the Spirit, even in operating physically and pr ducing this fruit, operated through the word. By co necting this with the preceding chapter, it will appea that all the productions of nature are the fruits of th *Spirit, by its* physical operations on matter; and that a *the revelations* of God are fruits of the Spirit, by i

ıysical operations on the minds of prophets and apos-
es; to which we will now add, that love, joy, peace,
ng-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness,
mperance, are fruits of the Holy Spirit, by its moral
erations, through the word, upon the hearts of believ-
s. Thus do we attribute to the Spirit universal opera-
on! Its physical operation is commensurate with cre-
ion; and its moral operation with revealed truth!

David says, "Whither shall I go *from thy Spirit?* or
hither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up
ıto heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell be-
old thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning,
nd dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there
ıall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold
ıe." Ps. 139. In the 13th verse of this Psalm, Da-
id declares that the Lord possessed his reins, and cov-
red him before he was born; and afterwards, in the same
'salm, represents his own substance as having been cu-
ously wrought by the plastic fingers of the great Crea-
r. These passages, and many others, prove to us,
ıe omnipresence of the physical energy of the divine
pirit:—that it is in heaven, in hell, and in the uncon-
cious fœtus; that, in short, it

> "Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

But as man is a moral being, he cannot perform moral
ctions without motives; therefore, the Holy Spirit pre-
ents motives to the mind, in order to the production of
ıoral action. By his physical energy he creates the
ıan, and holds him every moment in existence; but this
s no more a moral operation, than that by which a beast
s created and held in being; (for the spirit creates and
upports the brutal tribes, as well as men; and not a spar-
ow can fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father;)
he Spirit, therefore, presents to our minds motives, by
ıis word; and thus are we supported physically and
ıorally by the Spirit of God. Our natural food is pro-

duced by the operations of the Spirit on matter; our spiritual food, by its operations on the minds of the Apostles and Prophets.

Thus much have we written, in order to convince the reader, that we do not deny spiritual operations. We are sorry to say, that many preachers in this country have often brought against us this erroneous charge: preachers, who say that God has *called* and *sent* them to preach!! Now, all that we ask of them, is, that they read the preceding chapters on the Spirit, and never bring the above charge against us any more: for, if God has sent them to preach the gospel, they are certainly somewhat out of the line of their duty, when they circulate false charges against their fellow pilgrims. Do not be alarmed gentlemen, truth can stand without the aid of clerical legerdemain, or the tricks of pious misrepresentation!!!

MAN'S CAPABILITY OF MORAL ELEVATION AND OF MORAL DEGRADATION.

"*I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" is a sentiment replete with truth, and of momentous significancy! The moral nature of man is such, that he cannot at any time be stationary. If in the moral scale he does not ascend, he inevitably descends! He either rises step by step, towards that sublime moral and mental elevation of which he is capable, or slides along a slippery declivity, which leads to a state of moral degradation, far, far below brutality.

Man is the only being on earth, that is capable of rising above, or of falling below itself! and this is a proof of the intrinsic excellency and dignity of human nature. Brutes are neither capable of moral elevation nor degradation, because they have not been constituted by their Creator, moral beings, and are consequently incapable of moral action. But man has been *constituted a moral being*. The faculties of his soul and the organization and symmetry of his body, declare him the pre-eminent production of creative wisdom and goodness. He walks abroad with countenance erect. Intelligence burns in his eye; majesty sits enthroned on his countenance; the lamp of reason illumines his soul; and the whole sentient creation do him homage! This is the lofty elevation which by nature the human family have been permitted to occupy. But not only has the nature of man been thus elevated; the earth and its *fullness* have been given him—an overflowing abundance to minister to all his corporeal wants: and the heavens and the heaven of heavens have been brought into requisition to supply his moral necessities! Possessing an immortal spirit as well as a mortal body, he requires intellectual as well as animal nourishment; he is a link between heavenly and earthly beings; and therefore the subject of the administrations of two worlds!

Here then, as upon an elevated site, stands man, the fearfully made, the wonderfully organized child of heaven! Behold his capability of improvement! Although in infancy more helpless than the young of any of the bestial tribes, yet soon strength braces his body, agility renders elastic his limbs, the sun of intellection illumines his mind, and he begins his ascent. Now he lisps with difficulty the names of his parents; presently he is a proficient in many languages; the thunder of his eloquence is heard in the house of God, or in the Senate chamber; he captivates, he convulses listening thousands! Or it may be, that with Newton he will scan the heavens; or with Locke dissect the human mind; with Hunter the human body; or with Smith develope the deep principles of the human heart! Like Franklin, he may snatch the lightning from the heavens; or like Milton, astonish nations by the sublime melody of poetic numbers; or, what is better, like the benevolent Howard, become an angel of mercy to the sons and daughters of misery and poverty! Almost every nation and every age present cheering examples of the capability of man for improvement, moral and intellectual: and, so lofty have been the intellectual and moral flights of thousands of illustrious men, that we dare not say to the improveable capacity of man, thus far shalt thou go, but no farther! From infantile imbecility and ignorance, man may be capable, for ought we know, of winging his intellectual and moral flight, to the heights of the heavenly principality; and finally to a pinnacle infinitely exalted above every adoring angel that now surrounds the throne of the Almighty! Eternity! yes, eternity is the ocean to which we are tending! and eternity is the duration which has been appointed for the intellectual and moral improvement of man!! Who then shall set limits to human improvement?

But, let it be recollected, that this capability of moral and intellectual improvement, by which we may gain so exalted an elevation, is that which renders us capable of illimitable degradation! We perceive not how it could have been otherwise! Without those principles, by the abuse of which men degrade themselves, they would be incapable of moral and mental elevation—as much so as a beast! Therefore, in the proportion in which man is capable of rising above, is he capable of falling below himself; and, as his ascent is slowly progressive, so may be his descent likewise! Very few men have ever been known to rush precipitately into the perpetration of the worst of crimes. They begin by the commission of smaller sins. Perhaps the young man sometimes ventures to swear; his conscience smites, but he refuses to hearken. He ventures occasionally into bad company, and becomes a tippler; without, however, any intention of ever becoming intoxicated! He abhors drunkenness! But evil communications imperceptibly corrupt his heart. He acquires by custom an additional appetite for spirituous liquors, and a taste for the company of his vile associates, and in a short time he becomes not only a tippler, but a gambler. Now he is surrounded by the hot and poisonous fumes of every abomination. You may behold him staggering along the street, falling into the mud, and belching out, as if hell abode in his bosom, a thousand imprecations!! Ah! poor youth! how art thou fallen!! Yonder grunting swine is now a more dignified animal than thou!!! But the worst is not yet told. The young man neglects his business, spends his money for naught; soon poverty presses upon him; and his sad career ends at the gallows or in the penitentiary!!! It is true that all vicious young men have not travelled this road so far; but still their vicious course has been the downward road—the pathway of degradation and wretchedness—that which if followed may lead not only to a most shameful state of moral degradation here, but to the society of "devils," and "everlasting fire" hereafter.

Need we, in this place, inform the reader, that, if all men were by nature totally depraved, they would neither be capable of rising above, nor of falling below themselves? In no way within the compass of our imagination, would they be capable of progression in either virtue or vice! The whole viperous brood would act the viper, from birth to manhood, and from manhood to the grave. Every power of every human body, soul and spirit would be brought into active requisition, in order to the committing of every possible sin. Every virtuous action would be hated, and every truth abhorred; while every sin—every species of moral corruption, would be loved by all the unregenerate, with the most intense and unabating affection. Each man throughout the world would hate every other man—nay, parents would hate their own children, or if they loved them, they would love *a mass of sin!!!* Do we not speak advisedly? If every man in the world were to act in accordance with the appalling picture just drawn, would he be *more* than totally depraved? Certainly he would not! It follows, then, with the clearness of demonstration, that if the doctrine of total hereditary depravity were true, the order of things above described, would be immediately superinduced!! The whole man would love sin, because sin would be congenial with his nature; and he would hate every good thing, because all goodness would be in perfect opposition to his whole nature!! and his whole nature being wholly corrupt, would, with all its *powers,* tend to ALL corruption. We have sometimes seen men who had, by a long course of wickedness, rendered themselves so depraved, that they were unfit for society; they were hanged until they were dead! Now, these men were not more than totally depraved! Are all men, by nature, as depraved as these? Strange! strange! that this impossible doctrine should ever have been believed by reasonable creatures! We do believe that this doctrine is totally depraved!!!

THE FACILITY WITH WHICH THE MIND OF MAN MAY BE CAST INTO VARIOUS MORAL MOULDS.

The apostle Paul, denominates the truths of the christian religion, "*a mould of doctrine.*" Persons are said, when converted, to have been delivered into this mould. The idea is, that as metal takes the impressions of the mould into which it may be cast, so does the human mind receive the impressions which the truths of the christian religion are calculated to make; it conforms itself to the whole genius of christianity, as metal, in being cast, conforms itself to the whole internal configuration of its mould.

Now, as the truths of christianity are denominated *a mould* of doctrine, so may all other systems of religion be denominated *moulds* of doctrine. By a little observation we shall discover that religious systems are, and have been, exceedingly numerous. Myriads of them which were once popular, are now extinct; and still myriads continue to exist! We speak not exclusively of sectarian systems, which have been denominated christian, but of Mohamedanism, and of all the systems of heathenism. Numerous, however, as religious systems are and have been, the minds of the votarists of each and all of them, as if endued with the metallic attribute of *fusibility*, have been delivered into and received the *impressions of their respective systems.*

Does not this fact indicate man's aptitude to belief? If we consider the various systems of religion which have been believed by man, faith will almost appear to be an element of human nature! Instead of an incapacity to believe a rational system of religion, supported by adequate evidence, he has, under various circumstances, exhibited a capacity to believe irrational systems of religion, supported by no evidence at all! Behold the Atheist! he believes against all testimony—against all faith! He believes in all unbelief! The fact is, man seems to have been so constituted, that he must bow to some system of faith. or to some system of opinions. Hence, even the Atheist does homage to his system, and he becomes zealous in order to its propagation. It is true, that he has said, "there is no God."!! But Nature is the Atheist's God!! He attributes to Nature, almost all that Christians attribute to the Creator of Nature, and professes to believe a thousand things in relation to it, for which he has no evidence! We conclude, then, that there is in human nature an inherent aptitude to belief; and that this aptitude is indicated by the readiness with which men have embraced, and the tenacity with which they have adhered to all manner of religious systems.

With what facility do children, until deceived, believe every thing that is told them! The detection of falsehood in some of its associates, and not its native depravity, is that which engenders unbelief in its mind. If it were never to experience a falsehood, it would unhesitatingly believe every thing which should be told it.—This also is the principle upon which scepticism and infidelity have taken their rise and gained their influence. Seeing much hypocrisy in the world under a religious garb; witnessing the pious frauds and religious tricks of many religious persons; knowing the hollow-heartedness of thousands who profess to be the followers of Christ; they have concluded, not from any peculiar perversity of their own nature, but from the deleterious influence of that dissimulation and falsehood which they have beheld *in others*, that the Christian Religion is a farce, an imposture, and that its original founders were cheats and impostors!

We have often seen an effect similar to this produced in the minds of children, by the falsehoods of parents, at a very early period. For some time the little innocent believed every thing its parents told it; but finally, finding itself from time to time deceived by the false threats and false promises of its parents, it believed them with great difficulty; perhaps not at all! "Hush crying," the mother would say, "and I will give you a lump of sugar"!!! "No you won't ma," would bawl out the exasperated child!—The mother, you perceive, had previously, by making promises to it which she had not fulfilled, taught it to distrust her word! And thus was the child led to accuse its mother of lying; perhaps to lie itself!! At any rate, the mother in the above case was spoiling the child, for if she kept her word, she was giving it a fee to cry again!!

Children are endued with strongly imitative powers. With what facility do they learn to speak their mother tongue; nay, even the provincialisms of each State are exhibited by its inhabitants with such accuracy, that a man of observation has no difficulty to tell, by a person's pronunciation, from what particular State he may have emigrated. With the same facility also, do children conform to the manners and customs of the countries in which they are educated; and what is of particular interest, they seem to conform to good customs, with the same ease with which they conform to bad ones.—Behold the children of the Quakers! Not more conspicuous are they for the use of "Thee" and "Thou," than for plainness of dress, simplicity of manners, industry, frugality, hatred of slavery, war, &c. These facts our own eyes and ears have witnessed, and they afford data for this legitimate conclusion; that as the tender mind of youth is susceptible of conformity to the above named good customs and principles of the Quakers, it is also capable of conformity to all the principles and customs of christianity. "*Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*"

"'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.'

The very general neglect of the religious education of children, and the evil circumstances which surround them, cause the moral and mental capabilities of the infant race to be generally underrated. The early period however, at which they learn their mother tongue, and the tenacity with which they retain whatever they learn, should encourage parents to deposit within their susceptible minds, with all vigilance and perseverance, the seeds of truth. Be assured that the nature of children is a fruitful soil, and that it will produce abundantly, either good or evil, as either good or evil seeds may be sown in their minds! And remember, parents, we beseech you to remember, that in the great day of eternity, if you shall have been deficient in the momentous work of communicating religious instruction to your children, and in keeping them out of bad company, by which their hearts may be corrupted, it may be your awful destiny to accuse yourselves of having been the moral murderers of your own offspring! Remember that

> "Their minds, like tender oziers, take the bow,
> And as they first are bent, forever grow."

By neglecting the early religious instruction of children, they contract a multiplicity of bad habits; and these habits, in after life, are frequently the inveterate enemies of reformation. They are the moral fetters and manacles, by which the soul is chained down under the dominion of the Devil! Oh, parents! permit us to entreat you, not to permit your children to form evil habits of any kind. Watch over them as for eternity! Be assured that your children are as capable of the formation of good habits as of evil ones; and that when formed, they will be as inflexibly opposed to vice, as are evil habits to virtue. Be encouraged; the minds of your children will take the impressions of any mould! Behold the children of the Roman Catholics! Do you not perceive how indelible are the impressions which those children have received from the Catholic mould of doctrine. Give yours the impression of the christian mould. Give them these impressions at an early period; and they will grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength. "*Bring up a child in the way he should go,*" says Solomon, "*and when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

CONCLUSION.

Before we bring this volume to a close, we wish to present a few thoughts relative to the "animal" or "natural" man, mentioned by Paul, 1st Cor. 2: 14. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned."

If the reader desires to understand this subject he must read the whole connexion. In the verse next after the one which we have quoted, the apostle says, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things;" and continuing the same subject he says, in chapter the 3rd, "And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto *spiritual* but as unto *carnal,* even as unto *babes* in Christ. I have fed you with *milk* and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal."

The science of christianity, like every other science, has its rudiments or first principles; and these rudiments, like the rudiments of every other science, must be first inculcated upon the mind of the student. Until this shall have been done, he will be incapable of understanding those truths of christianity which relate to the more refined christian sympathies, and to the more exalted items of christian practice. The child must learn its alphabet before it can understand those elementary combinations by which the various words and sentences of the English language are formed. Until he shall have done so, these combinations will be foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are discerned through a knowledge of the power of letters. So must the student of christianity first learn the rudiments of christian science, called by the apostle, *milk;* without the receiving and digesting of which, he can never have a sufficiency of spiritual strength for the reception and digestion of *strong meat.* "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of *full age,* who by reason of *use* have had their *senses exercised* to the discerning of both good and evil."—Heb. 5.

When men are at first converted, they are mere spiritual babes, their minds are for the most part gross; not having had time to *use or exercise* their senses in the discerning of good and evil, they are perplexed with an obtusity of mind, when they attempt to investigate high spiritual truths. Nothing short of a *habit* of humble and patient investigation will so sharpen their mental eye, as to enable them to discern the innumerable, and in some cases rather dim, distinctive lines which have been drawn between good and evil. But until they shall *by reason of use* be able to discern these lines, they are babes, and are denominated carnal; because until they shall have arrived at this point of spiritual discernment, a proportional quantum of their former mental grossness will continue to vitiate all their mental and moral processes. Observe! These Corinthians were babes in Christ—and yet carnal! Why not "natural" or "animal?"

The apostle declares that he could not speak to them as he spake to spiritual persons. "We," says he, "speak wisdom among them that are perfect." But he could not so speak to these babes! The wisdom which he spake among the perfect, the spiritual men, would have been foolishness to spiritual babes, as incomprehensible as the more difficult parts of the spelling-book to a child not advanced beyond his alphabet. The natural man could not discern this high wisdom—the spiritual babe could not discern it because he was carnal. These declarations, however, no more import total human inability, relative to an understanding of spiritual things, than does the following sentence import total inability in relation to a knowledge of the arithmetic. A teacher might say to a boy, "I cannot say any thing to you on the subject of the Rule of Practice, for you are not yet far enough advanced to understand this rule; it would be foolishness to you were I to explain it;you must *exercise your senses* on other matters, yet for some time, by which means you will attain so high a degree of arithmetical discernment, that Practice will present to you no serious difficulties."

But if Paul's natural man was an unregenerate man, and the inability of the unregenerate to receive the things of the Spirit is to be considered absolute and unyielding, we perceive not how unregenerate men can be saved! Can an unregenerate man be saved without receiving the things of the Spirit? Nay,the Spirit himself? Well then if not, and he cannot receive the things of the spirit, and consequently cannot receive the spirit, how can he be saved? Upon our hypothesis there is no difficulty.—We admit that unregenerate men cannot receive the Spirit. Christ says they cannot receive it;" *whom the world cannot receive.*" John 14:17. But unregenerate men can receive the word; thousands of them have received it, and been quickened by it; and after receiving the first principles of truth, they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ,until they arrive at the stature of full grown men; at which time they will be capable of masticating the strong meat of the Christian Religion—they will themselves be spiritual!

May grace, mercy and peace, from God our Father, and from Jesus our Redeemer, be with all who walk in the Truth, now and Forever more. Amen.

THE END.

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